NATION

Kerala HC stays arrest of rape accused Cong MLA

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Biocon, Biocon Biologics to merge at $5.5 billion

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Jaiswal's ton, Kohli's 50 guide India to Series win over SA

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 7 DECEMBER 2025 | SUNDAY | BENGALURU | 15 JAMADIUL AKHIR, 1447 H | Vol 4 | Issue No 333 | Pages: 8

SALAR UPCLOSE

'Justice system must change to curb corruption'

AKSHITA MEHTA

In recent months, over 120 police personnel in Karnataka have been suspended on charges of corruption and misconduct. In an exclusive conversation with Salar News, former Bengaluru police commissioner and BJP spokesperson, Bhaskar Rao, speaks candidly about why such cases persist, the deep-rooted systems that encourage corruption, and why meaningful reform remains elusive.

—SALAR NEWS

>>>More on Page 5

Govt caps flight ticket prices amid mass cancellations

Tells Indigo to refund all tickets by Sunday; 800 flights cancelled, 124 from KIA

BAHARAMPUR, 6 DEC

Domestic carrier IndiGo cancelled over 800 flights on Saturday, the fifth day of the ongoing crisis, as the government imposed a cap on airfares and directed the airline to process all refunds by Sunday evening.

With IndiGo flight disruptions impacting thousands of passengers, the Civil Aviation Ministry on Saturday directed the airline to complete the ticket refund process for the cancelled flights by Sunday evening, and ensure baggage separated from the travellers are delivered in the next two days.

In a two-page order on capping the airfares, the Civil Aviation Ministry said disruptions in flight operations led to capacity constraints and unreasonable surge in the fares on a number of sectors.

However, the fare limits, excluding applicable charges, are not applicable for business class and UDAN flights, the civil aviation ministry said in an order. The order did not provide clarity on whether the caps are applicable for economy class tickets or both economy and premium economy class tickets.

The government said regulatory action will be initiated against the airline in case of any non-compliance.

The refund process for all cancelled or disrupted flights must be completed by 8pm on Sunday, the Civil Aviation Ministry said in a statement. "Airlines have also been instructed not to levy any rescheduling charges for passengers whose travel plans were affected by cancellations".

"The number of cancellations on Saturday dropped below 850 flights, much lower compared to (1,000 flights) on Friday," IndiGo said in a statement, adding that it is addressing all customer refund issues on "priority".

An analysis of fares on Friday showed that a one-way one-stop economy-class SpiceJet Kolkata-Mumbai flight ticket for 6 December costing up to Rs 90,000, and a similar ticket of Air India for Mumbai-Bhubaneswar going up to Rs 84,485. Among the worst hit airports was Bengaluru, where 124 flights (63 departures and 61 arrivals) were cancelled at the time of publishing. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2, 4

Passengers stand in a queue at an IndiGo airline's counter at Terminal 1 (T1) of the Indira Gandhi International Airport, in New Delhi, on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

TICKET PRICES

HERE'S THE MAXIMUM PRICE AIRLINES CAN CHARGE PER TICKET:

- Rs 7,500 for routes up to 500km
- Rs 12,000 for 500–1,000km
- Rs 15,000 for 1,000–1,500km
- Rs 18,000 for routes above 1,500km

People carry bricks to the site where former TMC MLA Humayun Kabir's lays the foundation stone for a mosque, modelled on Ayodhya's Babri Masjid, at Rejinagar in West Bengal's Murshidabad district, on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Ex-TMC MLA lays Babri foundation in Murshidabad

BAHARAMPUR, 6 DEC

Suspended TMC MLA Humayun Kabir laid the foundation stone for a mosque modelled on Ayodhya's Babri Masjid in West Bengal's Murshidabad district on Saturday. The move escalates political temperatures in the state where the assembly elections are due next year.

Amid a heavy deployment of state police, RAF and central forces, Kabir, alongside visiting Islamic clerics, cut a ceremonial ribbon on a sprawling stage at Rejinagar, even as the actual mosque construction site was nearly a kilometre away.

Slogans of "Nara-e-Takbeer, Allahu Akbar" rent the air as thousands, many of them carrying bricks on their heads, surged into the venue through the day.

> **Thirty-three years ago (when Ayodhya's Babri Masjid was vandalised), a deep wound was inflicted on the hearts of Muslims. Today, we are applying a small balm to that wound.**
>
> —Humayun Kabir, Suspended TMC MLA

The event was scheduled on the anniversary of the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992, a choice that has lent the ceremony both emotive charge and sharp political edge.

Security was also tightened in the adjoining Beldanga belt, in anticipation of possible flare-ups.

Kabir, who was suspended by the Trinamool Congress earlier this week on charges of indulging in "communal politics", repeatedly asserted that the proposed structure would come up "at any cost".

"Building a place of worship is a constitutional right. Babri Masjid will be built," he said.

He announced that the complex, spread across 25 bighas, would house a hospital, a medical college, a university, a hotel and a helipad, with the total projected investment costing Rs 300 crore. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Drop secular, socialist from Preamble: BJP MP's new bill

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

BJP Rajya Sabha MP Bhim Singh has introduced a Private Member's Bill in the Upper House to remove the words 'secular' and 'socialist' from the Preamble of the Constitution. The MP introduced the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2025, believing the terms are not required and were added in an "undemocratic" manner during the Emergency.

The original Constitution did not have these two words, Singh said. Indira Gandhi added the terms to the Constitution during the Emergency in 1976, under the 42nd Constitution Amendment. The BJP MP alleged that these two words were included for "politics of appeasement".

The Bill calls for removing the words 'secular' and 'socialist', stating that it will not impact any fundamental rights or other provisions of the Constitution.

A Private Member's Bill is a legislative proposal introduced in parliament by a member who is not a Minister. Only 14 Private Members' Bills have been passed into law. *—PTI*

Indian student burnt alive in US blaze

NEW YORK, 6 DEC

A 24-year-old Indian student, Sahaja Reddy Udumala, died after suffering severe injuries in a house fire in the US. She was living and pursuing her Master's in Albany, New York. Albany Fire Department responded to the house fire on the morning of 4 December. When they arrived at the scene, officers and firefighters found the residence fully engulfed in flames and learned that several individuals were still inside the home. Four adult victims were inside the residence and were treated on scene before being transported to a hospital. Unfortunately, Udumala sustained severe burn injuries affecting nearly 90 per cent of her body. A fundraiser has been launched by Udumala's cousin Rathna Gopu to help cover funeral. *—PTI*

India to build Russian weapons, spare parts

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

Russia agreed to allow the joint manufacturing in India of military hardware and spare parts for the maintenance of Russian-origin arms and defence equipment.

Ways to bolster overall bilateral defence cooperation figured prominently during the talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday.

It has been a long-standing grievance of armed forces that the supply of critical spares and equipment from Russia takes a long time, affecting the maintenance of Russian equipment.

"Both sides agreed to encourage joint manufacturing in India of spare parts, components, aggregates and other products for the maintenance of Russian origin defence equipment under the make-in-India programme through transfer of technology," a joint statement said.

PATANJALI SIGNS MOU WITH RUSSIA

Patanjali group on Saturday signed an MoU with the Russian government to promote health and wellness, and an exchange of skilled human resources, said Baba Ramdev. The MoU also seeks to expand Patanjali's presence in Russia. *— PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3, 6

MAHAPARINIRVAN DIWAS

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge and DyCM DK Shivakumar pay tribute to Dr BR Ambedkar on his 69th death anniversary, at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru, Saturday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Congress worker killed in clash in Chikkamagaluru

CHIKKAMAGALURU, 6 DEC

A Congress worker, Ganesh Gowda, 38, was allegedly murdered during a violent clash between two groups in Chikkamagaluru district of the State on Friday night. The confrontation occurred in Sakharayapatna, Kadur taluk, sparking serious injuries among several participants.

The trouble began around 9.30pm over a banner dispute near a local mutt. Prior to the fatal altercation, the same groups had clashed nearby at a bar, escalating tensions in the area. Following the incident, several individuals were treated for head injuries at the Chikkamagaluru district hospital.

A case has been registered at the Sakharayapatna police station. Home Minister G Parameshwara said, "The investigation will determine the reasons behind the attack, and the police will take action and submit a report to the government.

Police are searching for the suspects. *—PTI*

GHAZIABAD MOST POLLUTED IN NOV, DELHI 4TH WORST

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

Ghaziabad was the most polluted city in India in November, with a monthly average PM2.5 concentration of 224 micrograms per cubic metre, according to a new analysis.

Noida, Bahadurgarh, Delhi, Hapur, Greater Noida, Baghpat, Sonipat, Meerut and Rohtak joined Ghaziabad in the list of 10 most polluted cities, the report by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air said. Uttar Pradesh accounted for six of these cities, followed by Haryana with three and Delhi. Except Delhi, all the other cities in the top 10 list logged higher PM2.5 levels than last year.

Delhi ranked the fourth most polluted city with a monthly average PM2.5 concentration of 215 micrograms per cubic metre in November.

The effect of stubble burning was lower this year, contributing an average of 7 per cent to Delhi's pollution in November.

Except Bahadurgarh, none of the top 10 cities saw even one day within the safe daily limit as per national standards. *— PTI*

EXPERTS CALL FOR EVACUATION

CO level 'dangerously high' in J'khand's Dhanbad gas leak area

DHANBAD, 6 DEC

A team of experts has visited the area in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district, where "poisonous gas leak" from underground mines created panic earlier this week, and recorded the carbon monoxide (CO) level in the air as "dangerously high," at up to 1,500 parts per million (PPM), an official said on Saturday.

The dangerous level of carbon monoxide concentration starts at 50 PPM.

The emission of CO was reported on Wednesday from Rajput Basti, Masjid Muhalla and Area No. 5, which come under the Putki-Balihari colliery area of Bharat Coking Coal Limited. The BCCL had decided to shift around 1,000 locals. Till Saturday, 400 of them have been shifted.

A joint experts' team of Dhanbad IIT-ISM and Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) assessed the carbon monoxide level on Friday. They recorded the level of carbon monoxide at up to 1,500 PPM, which poses a serious threat to humans, and recommended the immediate shifting of residents.

Headache starts when the level reaches 200 PPM, and symptoms like dizziness, nausea and unconsciousness begin at 800 PPM. *—PTI*

12 Uttar Pradesh workers stranded in Kyrgyzstan

PILIBHIT, 6 DEC

The Pilibhit district administration has sent a report to the Uttar Pradesh Home Department regarding 12 labourers from the district, who are reportedly stranded in Kyrgyzstan.

District Magistrate Gyanendra Singh said the report was prepared after the Home Department sought details and directed the SP to conduct a probe.

The men's families alleged that they are being tortured abroad, and that local agents are demanding Rs 2 lakh for their return. The labourers have also been sending video messages to their families, appealing for rescue.

The relatives have been approaching the police for help. Earlier this week, several family members met DM Singh and SP Abhishek Yadav and narrated their ordeal.

The families said the workers — Ravi Kumar, Ajay, Chandrapal, Santram, Rohit, Ramesh, Harswaroop, Shyamcharan, Sanjeev, Prempal, Ramasare and Harishankar — had been sent to Kyrgyzstan nearly three months ago by agents running a recruitment agency. Each worker reportedly paid about Rs 2.5 lakh, and was sent on a 59-day visa with "misleading contracts," relatives said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Will respond to L&O questions in Assembly, says HM

BENGALURU, 6 DEC

Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Saturday that he will give a suitable response in the State Legislature about the law and order situation if the Opposition raises the matter to target the government. The Opposition BJP said that the law and order situation will be among the main issues that it will raise during the Winter Session.

"I will give a suitable answer (in the Assembly) as to how the law and order situation is in Karnataka and in BJP-ruled states. Also, how law and order was there when the BJP was in power in the State, and how it is now with figures," Parameshwara said. He said he would speak on the Parappana Agrahara Central Jail incidents and the Dharmasthala SIT in the House if asked. *—PTI*

MP asks Centre for direct train from Kolar to City

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

Kolar Lok Sabha member M Mallesh Babu has called on the Union Government to establish direct train services between Kolar and Bengaluru. Speaking in the Lok Sabha, Babu highlighted that a survey for a railway line linking Whitefield to Kolar, approximately 52km, was completed thirteen years ago, yet construction has yet to commence. He stated, "Thousands of wage earners, employees, and students commute daily between Kolar and Bengaluru by road; train services would save them precious time." Babu also urged the Railway Minister to increase the number of bogies on the existing MEMU train service. Additionally, he announced plans to develop Antharaganga Hills. *—Salar News*

Prison inmates assault staff over tobacco denial

KARWAR, 6 DEC

Tensions erupted at Karwar Central Prison in the State when inmates assaulted three staff members, including the jailor, after being denied tobacco and cigarettes. The incident occurred on Saturday morning during breakfast service when some prisoners demanded tobacco instead of food. Authorities rejected their requests, citing the prohibition of intoxicants and banned substances in prisons, prompting the inmates to react violently. The assailants, identified as Mohammad Abdul Fayan and Kaushik Nihal from Mangaluru, attacked Jailor Kallappa Gasti and two other staff members. The assault was recorded by CCTV cameras inside the facility, and the footage has since circulated widely on social media. In response to the incident, security measures have been heightened in the prison. *—Salar News*

Police chief tells cops to check their integrity

DGP says any cop involved in criminal acts will face action

BENGALURU, 6 DEC

- Saleem cited recent incidents, including the Davangere case, where two police Sub-Inspectors were arrested for allegedly robbing a gold merchant, and the Bengaluru case where a constable was held for high-value cash robbery

DGP & IP MA Saleem
PHOTO: X/@MASALEEMIPS

In response to a surge in cases involving police personnel in robbery, theft and fraud, Director General MA Saleem has directed all police units to conduct regular background checks, integrity assessments and counselling to prevent misconduct in the force.

He warned that any police officer or staff member found engaging in criminal acts will face the "most severe" disciplinary action.

In a circular dated 5 December issued to all SPs, zonal heads, commissioners, the State DG and IGP stated that such involvement of police personnel in criminal or illegal activities is completely unacceptable.

He cited recent incidents, including the Davangere case, where two police Sub-Inspectors were arrested for allegedly robbing a gold merchant after posing as IG Squad officers, and the Bengaluru case in which a Govindpura police constable was held for his role in a meticulously planned, high-value cash robbery from a van in collusion with a former cash management firm employee.

"These incidents bring shame to the force, damage public confidence, and cast doubt on the integrity of the entire law enforcement machinery," he said.

Saleem has directed the unit officers to conduct regular background checks and integrity assessments of all subordinate officers and staff without fail. He has instructed the department to organise awareness sessions and training programmes on ethical conduct, legal responsibilities, and the consequences of corruption and misconduct.

"Immediately report to Police Headquarters any information regarding illegal activities or criminal behaviour by any police officer or employee," it stated.

The unit officers have been instructed to provide guidance and counselling programmes to address issues related to low morale, work-related stress, and other factors that may contribute to ethical lapses.

Saleem asked unit officers to strictly enforce the existing Code of Conduct. *—PTI*

BENGALURU GETS LIT

Citizens swarmed the Bangalore Literature Festival at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Saturday; International Booker Prize Winner Banu Mushtaq signs her books for visitors. Notable speakers for Sunday include Manu Joseph, Chetan Bhagat and Amish
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

'VERY SHOCKING'

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar looks at Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Harassment: DKS after getting notice in Nat'l Herald case

BENGALURU, 6 DEC

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday termed the Delhi Police's notice to him, seeking financial and transactional details as part of its probe into the National Herald case, as "harassment" and said he will fight it legally.

Shivakumar, who is also the KPCC Chief, questioned the need for a separate police probe when the ED had already filed a chargesheet in connection with the case.

The notice issued by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) states that Shivakumar is "supposed to have vital information" pertaining to the National Herald case registered on 3 October against Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

"It is very shocking to me. I have provided all the details to the ED. The ED had summoned me and my brother (former MP DK Suresh) also. There is nothing wrong, it is our (party) institution (National Herald, Young India), and we being Congressmen, we have supported the institution, there is no hide and seek, everything is in black and white," Shivakumar said.

In the notice dated 29 November, the EOW has summoned Shivakumar to appear before it or provide the requested information by 19 December latest.

Calling the move as nothing but "harassment", the Deputy CM said, "What is there in it? It is our money, we can give it to anyone, whomever we like, when we pay taxes." *—PTI*

Lokayukta Inspector burnt to death in car crash

DHARWAD, 6 DEC

Tragedy struck in Dharwad as Lokayukta Inspector CPC Panchakshari Salimath was burnt alive in a horrific car accident. The incident occurred on the Gadag-Hubballi highway, near the Arera bridge close to Bhadrapur, at approximately 7.30pm.

Salimath was driving his i20 car when it collided with a divider, leading to an intense fire that engulfed the vehicle within minutes. According to initial police reports, a spark from a potential petrol leakage caused the flames to erupt quickly.

"The vehicle caught fire within seconds, and within a few minutes, it was entirely burnt," a police spokesperson stated.

The inspector was reportedly en route to Gadag to visit his family when the crash occurred. Eyewitness accounts suggest that the impact of the collision prevented him from escaping the burning car. Firefighters, who responded swiftly to the scene, extinguished the fire; however, Salimath was unable to survive.

The charred remains inside the vehicle made identification challenging. Eventually, Salimath's family recognised him by the bracelet he was wearing at the time of the accident.

This incident comes closely on the heels of the death of IAS officer Mahantesh Bilagi in a separate road accident.

The Annigeri Police Station is now handling the investigation. *—Salar News*

BYV: BJP, farmers to lay siege to Suvarna Vidhana Soudha on 9 Dec

BENGALURU, 6 DEC

State BJP President BY Vijayendra said the saffron party with a large number of farmers will lay siege to the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi on 9 December during the winter session of the state legislature.

He said the protest aims to highlight various issues concerning the State and the "failures" of the Congress government.

Vijayendra said the Opposition BJP and JD(S) have not discussed moving a no-confidence motion against the Siddaramaiah-led government during the session, but quipped, "it won't be surprising if members of the ruling party themselves" moved the motion.

Vijayendra on Saturday told reporters that the BJP-JD(S) have discussed plans for the Winter Session and planned to bring up issues "related to North Karnataka, irrigation and farmers".

The Winter Session of the Karnataka legislature will be held in Belagavi from 8 to 19 December. He said discussions on issues related to North Karnataka were usually held only "for name's sake".

The BJP Chief said sugarcane farmers' issues remain unresolved, maize procurement has been poorly handled, and only 5 lakh metric tonnes of the total 54 lakh metric tonnes have been procured by the State government. Procurement of green gram, black gram and paddy has also not begun, Vijayendra, the son of former CM BS Yediyurappa, said. *—PTI*

> **The BJP plans to lay siege to the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi (on 9 December) by gathering about 15,000-20,000 farmers on 9 December. We want to awaken this anti-farmer government from its deep slumber.**
>
> -BY Vijayendra, State BJP President

VHP plans Statewide protests on 8 Dec over cattle transport law

UDUPI, 6 DEC

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has called for the immediate withdrawal of a proposed amendment to the Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Act, 2020, claiming it "targets Hindus" and undermines efforts to prevent illegal cattle transport. The group's Gau Raksha Wing for Karnataka South announced district-level protests on 8 December.

Currently, the law requires a bank guarantee for the release of vehicles seized under accusations of illegal cattle transportation. However, the State government's recent Cabinet proposal suggests allowing vehicles to be released on an indemnity bond instead.

VHP leaders stated that this measure reflects "sympathy for cattle lifters. *—PTI*

HDK is a Manuvadi: CM on Gita curriculum

BENGALURU/ HASSAN, 6 DEC

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday called Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy a "Manuvadi" (lover of 'Manu Smriti') for seeking the inclusion of Bhagavad Gita in school curriculum.

The CM's dig came in response to Kumaraswamy's recent letter to Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan, requesting the same.

"After Kumaraswamy joined hands with the BJP for elections, he has become a Manuvadi," Siddaramaiah told press after paying tributes to BR Ambedkar on his 69th death anniversary in the City.

Remembering Ambedkar, Siddaramaiah highlighted his contribution to the Constitution and his relentless fight to provide social justice. Fed up with social and caste system in Hinduism, and unable to reform it, Ambedkar accepted Buddhism, the CM noted.

Hitting back, Kumaraswamy, said in Mandya that Siddaramaiah's intention was to create a rift between communities.

"Have I asked for everyone to be converted? What is Manuvadi in it?" he said.

WOMEN RESERVATION

Speaking in Hassan later, Siddaramaiah continued to flay Kumaraswamy, asking what he had done for backward classes despite claiming to be from the farmer community.

Noting that the Supreme Court has expressed concern over the non-implementation of women's reservation, he said if reservation should be given, it must be implemented immediately.

"Why should the central government keep postponing this?" he said. *—Agencies*

DGCA also at fault: Rajanna on IndiGo flight disruptions

TUMAKURU, 6 DEC

Amid widespread disruptions in air travel due to multiple IndiGo flight delays and cancellations, Karnataka Congress MLA KN Rajanna said on Saturday that the blame also lay with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), and the fingers cannot be pointed only towards the airlines.

He claimed the DGCA's law ultimately led IndiGo to declare a pilot shortage, as it requires pilots to serve only eight hours. IndiGo Airlines was making its pilots work 10-12 hours.

He said, "IndiGo is making its pilots work 10-12 hours, which is also not correct. Now, as per DGCA's insistence on eight hours, IndiGo has created a pilot shortage. As DGCA is under civil aviation, we have to blame IndiGo, DGCA and the Civil Aviation Ministry." *—ANI*

Woman dies by suicide; family alleges forced conversion bid

BELAGAVI, 6 DEC

A 28-year-old married woman from Gonaganur village in Ramdurg taluk, Belagavi district, committed suicide after what her family said was harassment and threats from a man in the same village.

The deceased has been identified as Nagavva Demappa Vantamoori. Her family filed a police complaint accusing Maktumsab Patel of pressuring her to convert to Islam and to continue a relationship she had ended. They allege that repeated threats and visits to her home caused severe distress, leading to her death.

Nagavva, who was married for nine years, reportedly came into contact with the accused about a year after her marriage. According to the family, the acquaintance later turned into an illicit relationship. After the relationship came to light, her family intervened, and she severed contact with him.

The complaint states that Patel continued to threaten her after this, insisting she convert to Islam and resume the relationship.

Her family claims this directly contributed to her suicide.

The body has been shifted to BIMS Hospital in Belagavi for post-mortem. *— Salar News*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

22 TIGERS CAUGHT IN 42 DAYS

Another tiger cub rescued near Nagarhole Reserve

MYSURU, 6 DEC

Forest department officials have rescued a three-month-old female tigress cub that hid at Gurupura Tibetan Colony, located very close to Nagarhole Tiger Reserve, in Hunsur taluk on Saturday.

Following complaints of tigress cub sighting near their village, Forest Department officials launched the operation, using drone cameras and other forest department staff captured the tigress cub. A team of officials led by ACF Lakshmikanth RFO Vinodgowda, nabbed the tigress cub.

The department will initiate measures to reunite the cub with her mother tigress after shifting it to a safe location, officials said.

Speaking to Salar News, Deputy Conservator of Forests Paramesh said that his department officials have successfully captured a total of 22 tigers, including 12 cubs after launching combing operation in different taluks of the district as part of measures to reduce human-wildlife conflict in the 42 days between 12 October and 30 November.

He said that district has witnessed increasing tiger disturbances across several taluks including HD Kote, Saragur, Nanjangud, Hunsur that shares border with Bandipur and Nagarahole Tiger Reserve

Every year, from September to December, tigresses give birth and seek shelter along forest fringes, often near villages, tanks and fields, Paramesh said. During this period, they become highly protective of their cubs, frequently attacking livestock and occasionally humans, leading to a sharp rise in tiger-human conflict cases.

This year, in the Mysuru region alone, tigers attacked four people, claiming three lives, leaving residents of forest-edge villages in fear.

Following widespread public demand for action, the Forest Department deployed additional staff and launched intensive combing operations. Within just 42 days, 22 tigers were captured across different ranges, he said, adding that they are being rehabilitated as per guidelines. *—Salar News*

The rescued three-month-old tiger cub
PHOTO: SALAR

PHOTO: PTI

Special SIR camp for Kolkata's sex workers on 9 Dec

KOLKATA, 6 DEC

The West Bengal CEO's office is set to launch a camp on 9 December at Sonagachi, Asia's largest red-light district, to help sex workers fill up enumeration forms distributed as per the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, an official said on Saturday. This initiative comes after concerns were raised by organisations working for sex workers and their children. Election Commission officials will "visit the wards of the 166-Shyampukur constituency to meet sex workers and provide assistance for filling up the enumeration forms," he said. An official of Amra Padatik, a civil society organisation, said that they were concerned about the fate of sex workers in Kidderpore and Kalighat red-light areas. *—PTI*

Ambedkar's legacy strengthened my commitment: RaGa

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

The Congress party paid tribute to BR Ambedkar on the occasion of his 69th death anniversary, with Rahul Gandhi stating that Ambedkar's "timeless legacy of equality, justice, and human dignity strengthens my resolve to defend the Constitution". Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge also honoured Ambedkar saying, "Today, more than ever, we are called upon to uphold, preserve and defend the values he lived for and his greatest gift to the nation, the Constitution of India." Gandhi paid floral tributes at Ambedkar's statue at Prerna Sthal on the Parliament House premises. After the ceremony, he told reporters, "Ambedkar ji is an icon. He showed a path to the entire country; he gave us the Constitution." *—PTI*

Jharkhand CM appears before MP-MLA court

RANCHI, 6 DEC

At the direction of the High Court, Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren appeared before the MP-MLA court over alleged non-compliance with Enforcement Directorate (ED) summons. The ED had moved the court on the basis that Soren "did not turn up for questioning" despite earlier notices issued to him in connection with an alleged land scam. The High Court allowed Soren to avoid repeated personal appearances, provided he appeared on 6 December. Soren does not need to appear in person for his next hearing on 12 December. Soren had challenged the order passed by the MP-MLA court on his personal appearance. The high court directed the ED to file its response to a petition submitted by the CM, challenging summonses. *—PTI*

Uddhav urges SC action on voters list 'mess'

MUMBAI, 6 DEC

Shiv Sena [UBT] leader Uddhav Thackeray criticised the year-long delay in appointing the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Maharashtra Assembly and insisted that LoPs for both legislative houses must be announced in the next Winter Session. Thackeray said the Supreme Court must take suo motu notice of the "mess" in the Maharashtra electoral rolls and urged the opposition to ask the Court to postpone local body polls until the rolls are corrected. Thackeru contends that if no LoP is appointed, then the posts of deputy chief minister should also be abolished. If the government fails to appoint a LoP then it will be the first time in history that a session will be held without one. *—PTI*

'Babri Masjid-style' mosque sparks row

BJP leader alleges that WB CM was using MLA Kabir to polarise Muslims for political gains

A man is seen kissing the stacks of bricks before the foundation stone is laid for a mosque modelled on Ayodhya's Babri Masjid, at Rejinagar in West Bengal's Murshidabad district **PHOTO: PTI**

KOLKATA, 6 DEC

Legislator Humayun Kabir's plan to lay the foundation for a 'Babri Masjid-style' mosque in Murshidabad on Saturday sparked a political slugfest in West Bengal, with the BJP accusing the Trinamool Congress, which has suspended the MLA, of polarising the people, and the ruling party in the state dismissing the charge as baseless.

Senior BJP leader Amit Malviya, in a post on X, alleged that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was using the MLA to polarise Muslims for political gains and that reports from Beldanga had triggered "serious concern". He claimed that Kabir's supporters had been seen carrying bricks to construct what he called a Babri Masjid and that the MLA had asserted that he had police backing.

Calling Beldanga one of the most communally sensitive regions of the state, Malviya warned that any unrest could disrupt National Highway 12 -- the lifeline connecting north Bengal with the south -- with "grave consequences for law and order and even national security".

Kabir, who was suspended from the TMC earlier this week over the controversial project, is slated to address a rally at Muradighi Maidan on Saturday morning, after which he plans to lay the foundation stone for the proposed Babri Masjid-style mosque.

Senior BJP leader Dilip Ghosh termed the episode "vote-bank politics", alleging that the ruling party in the state was seeking to stoke communal passions ahead of assembly elections, likely early next year. "TMC is using Humayun Kabir as a freelancer to create tension before elections," Ghosh alleged.

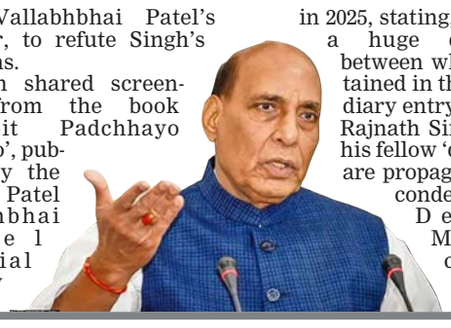
The TMC hit back, accusing Kabir of acting in tacit understanding with the BJP and RSS to disturb peace in the district. A senior TMC leader alleged that the suspended MLA was "on the payroll of the BJP" and was functioning as its agent to provoke unrest.

West Bengal is bracing for a politically fraught Saturday as Kabir pushes ahead with the foundation-laying ceremony despite mounting political tensions, prompting a high-security alert across Murshidabad. *—PTI*

Cong cites Maniben Patel's diary, demands Rajnath's apology

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

The Congress party has called on Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** to apologise for his remarks regarding India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, claiming he wished to use public funds to build the Babri masjid. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh referred to diary entries by Maniben Patel, Vallabhbhai Patel's daughter, to refute Singh's assertions.



Ramesh shared screenshots from the book 'Samarpit Padchhayo Sardarno', published by the Sardar Patel Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Society in 2025, stating, "There is a huge difference between what is contained in the original diary entry and what Rajnath Singh ji and his fellow 'distorians' are propagating." He condemned the Defence Minister's comments, labelling them a "lie" and "WhatsApp university story".

Singh made his claims during an address at Sadhli village, asserting that while Nehru wanted to build the Babri masjid, Patel had thwarted these plans. BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi also referenced Maniben's diary, claiming it supported Singh's statements. *—PTI*

TMC leader murdered in WB's Birbhum

KOLKATA, 6 DEC

A local leader of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) was brutally murdered by unidentified assailants in Birbhum district, West Bengal, on Friday night. Rajbehari Sardar, aged 65 and serving as the booth chief in the Patisara gram panchayat, was attacked by a group of five to six individuals during a function in the Nanoor area at around 10pm, police reported.

Sardar was swiftly taken to Mangalkot Hospital in the neighbouring Purba Bardhaman district, where he was pronounced dead upon arrival. His son has alleged that rival faction members within the party were responsible for the attack.

Local TMC leadership expressed their shock. *—PTI*

LS tables private bill on regulating deepfakes

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

A Private Member's Bill aimed at establishing a clear legal framework for regulating deepfakes has been introduced in the Lok Sabha by **Shrikant Shinde**, a leader of the Shiv Sena party. The Regulation of Deepfake Bill aims to safeguard citizens by mandating prior consent from individuals depicted in deepfake content.

"Misuse of deepfakes for harassment, deception and misinformation has escalated, creating an urgent need for regulatory safeguards," Shinde remarked. The Bill stipulates penalties for offenders who create or disseminate deepfake content with malicious intent.

In his statement regarding the Bill, Shinde highlighted that while deepfake technology has potential applications in education, entertainment, and creative industries, it also poses severe risks when misused. "It threatens individual privacy, national security and pub-lic trust," he stated.

The proposed legislation seeks to establish a legal framework governing the creation, distribution, and application of deepfakes in India. It also calls for the establishment of a Deepfake Task Force, a dedicated body to address national security concerns and assess the impact of deepfakes on privacy, civic participation, and potential election interference.

The task force is set to collaborate with academic and private sector institutions to develop technologies for detecting manipulated content, thereby enhancing credibility in digital media. Additionally, the Bill proposes the formation of a fund to support initiatives in both public and private sectors focused on detecting and deterring advanced image manipulation. This Private Member's Bill allows lawmakers who are not ministers to highlight important issues and advocate for necessary legislative changes. *—PTI*

Omar says INDIA bloc is almost in the ICU

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and National Conference leader **Omar Abdullah** on Saturday warned that the opposition INDIA bloc is "on life support" and risks being moved into the "ICU" due to persistent infighting and its inability to counter the BJP's relentless election machinery.

Speaking at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit, Abdullah said the alliance suffers from chronic organisational and strategic weaknesses, exposed again by the Bihar election results. He partly blamed the bloc for Nitish Kumar's return to the BJP-led NDA, criticising its internal discord and the exclusion of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha from Bihar's seat-sharing arrangement.

Abdullah argued that the BJP operates on a continuous 24x7 political cycle, treating every election as high-stakes, while the opposition often enters the fray only months before polls.

FM LAUDS OMAR'S ECONOMIC FOCUS

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman praised Abdullah for his "focused" efforts to revive J&K's economy. Abdullah thanked her and wittily replied, "Please show me the money, ma'am." She noted improvements, particularly after restoring J&K Bank, though tourism suffered due to external factors. *—PTI*

Money laundering: Ex-IAS officer gets 5-yr imprisonment

AHMEDABAD, 6 DEC

A special court on Saturday sentenced retired IAS officer Pradeep Sharma to five years' imprisonment in a money laundering case related to the sanctioning of government land to a private company at concessional rates between 2003 and 2006, when he was the Kutch district collector. The court also fined him Rs 50,000.

Special PMLA judge K M Sojitra convicted him under Sections 3 and 4 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The court further ordered that Sharma's properties seized by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) during the investigation would remain confiscated by the Central government.

The Ahmedabad zonal office of the ED had registered a criminal case against Sharma and others in March 2012 under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Sharma was first arrested in July 2016 and released on bail in March 2018.

The investigation revealed that Sharma, as the then chairman of the district land pricing committee, sanctioned a large parcel of government land to Welspun India Limited at concessional rates in violation of norms.

The ED claimed that Sharma used his wife's bank account for layering proceeds of crime received from Welspun India and its group companies. *—PTI*

Warm atmosphere at Putin banquet, says Tharoor

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor and other dignitaries during a state banquet at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, who attended a banquet for Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday at the Rashtrapati Bhawan, described the atmosphere there as "warm" and "engaging," and said he enjoyed his conversations with many of the attendees.

Tharoor's remarks came a day after President Droupadi Murmu hosted a banquet for Putin at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here. Murmu, while welcoming President Putin at the banquet, had said that his visit marked an important milestone, the 25th anniversary of the India-Russia strategic partnership, which was established in October 2000.

Murmu also appreciated Putin's personal commitment to the India-Russia strategic partnership.

The Congress on Friday said that the leaders of the opposition, Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, were not invited to the banquet, and took a swipe at Tharoor for accepting the invite.

The party's publicity department head, Pawan Khera, accused the government of breaking protocols and not following democratic principles.

"There is no invite for both the LoPs, Mr Kharge and Mr Rahul Gandhi. This government is known for breaching all protocols," Khera said on Friday. *—PTI*

Cong flays Centre over new US security strategy

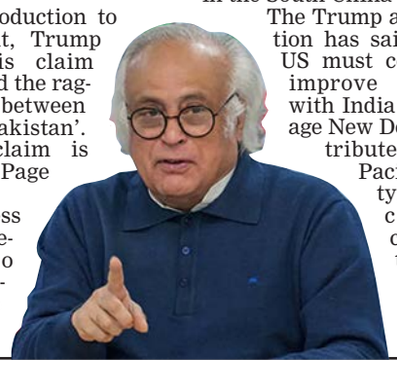
NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

- The party pointed out that the document reiterates US President Donald Trump's claim that he settled the "raging conflict" between India and Pakistan.

In a swipe at the Modi government over the new US national security strategy, the Congress said it marks a notable shift in the US approach to Pakistan, and avoids the explicit criticism that defined the 2017 Donald Trump-era strategy document, which openly accused Islamabad of supporting militants targeting US partners.

The party also pointed out that the document reiterates US President Donald Trump's claim that he settled the "raging conflict" between India and Pakistan.

"In his introduction to the document, Trump reiterates his claim that he 'settled the raging conflict between India and Pakistan'. The same claim is repeated on Page 8," Ramesh.



The Congress general secretary also shared screenshots of the document where reference is made to Trump's claims on stopping the India-Pakistan conflict in May. The National Security Strategy released by the Trump administration late Thursday stressed strong cooperation with India to address the security challenge in the South China Sea.

The Trump administration has said that the US must continue to improve relations with India to encourage New Delhi to contribute to Indo-Pacific security, including continued cooperation within Quad grouping. *—PTI*

AMID PUTIN'S INDIA VISIT

India-Russia ties among 'steadiest' globally:EAM

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar greets Russian President Vladimir Putin as the latter prepares to depart from New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

- The India-US relations are going through possibly the worst phase in the last two decades after Washington imposed a whopping 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods, including 25 per cent levies for New Delhi's procurement of Russian crude oil.

The India-Russia partnership has been among the "steadiest big relationships" in the last 70-80 years and President Vladimir Putin's visit to New Delhi was about "reimagining" the ties with a focus on economic engagement, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday.

In an interactive session, he also disagreed with views that Putin's visit could complicate India's negotiations with the US on a bilateral trade agreement.

"No, I disagree with you. I think everybody knows that India has relations with all the major countries in the world," Jaishankar said at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit.

"I think for any country to expect to have a veto or a say in how we develop our relations with others is not a reasonable proposition."

Jaishankar was asked if Putin's two-day visit to New Delhi that focused largely on significantly enhancing the economic dimension of India-Russia ties will have a bearing on the negotiations with the US for the proposed trade deal.

"Because remember, the others can expect the same. I think we've always made it very clear that we have multiple relationships. We have a freedom of choice," he said.

"We talk about what is called strategic autonomy and that continues and I cannot imagine why anybody would have reason to expect the contrary," he added.

The external affairs minister acknowledged that the focus of the Trump administration has been on trade and noted that India's approach in navigating it is totally driven by national interests.

The India-US relations are going through possibly the worst phase in the last two decades after Washington imposed a whopping 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods, including 25 per cent levies for New Delhi's procurement of Russian crude oil. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Rs 11 cr drugs seized, peddlers arrested in Assam

GUWAHATI, 6 DEC

Drugs valued at Rs 11 crore have been confiscated, and suspected dealers apprehended during operations across Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced. The raids were conducted in Karbi Anglong and Cachar districts. "Massive drugs haul in Assam today. From Karbi Anglong to Silchar, drug peddlers are having a run for their money as @assampolice keeps rolling out real-life Narcos episodes!" Sarma posted on X. The seized substances included Yaba tablets and other illegal items. Yaba tablets, which contain methamphetamine, are prohibited under the Controlled Substances Act in India. Although he did not disclose the number of arrests, images shared on social media indicated that at least six individuals were detained. *—PTI*

'UP govt to build walls around Ambedkar statues'

LUCKNOW, 6 DEC

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said the state government will build boundary walls around the statues of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar to protect them from attacks by vandals. He made the remarks while addressing 'Mahaparinirvaan Diwas' (death anniversary) programme of Baba Saheb Ambedkar in Lucknow on Saturday. "Today, our government is going to take another important decision, and that decision is that wherever statues of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar are installed in Uttar Pradesh, steps will be taken to protect them as some elements often vandalise these statues. They try to damage them. Our government will create a system to protect these statues by constructing a wall around them," he said. *—PTI*

Kashmir temp drops, Shopian hits minus 6.4°C

SRINAGAR, 6 DEC

Nighttime temperatures in Kashmir have plummeted well below freezing following a brief respite, with Shopian recording the coldest temperature in Jammu and Kashmir at minus 6.4 degrees Celsius, officials reported on Saturday. After experiencing a milder evening on Thursday, when temperatures were above freezing in most areas, the valley has returned to biting cold conditions. The minimum temperature in Srinagar, the summer capital, dropped sharply to minus 4.1 degrees Celsius on Friday night, a significant decline from 0.4 degrees Celsius the previous night. Other notable low temperatures included minus 4.2 degrees Celsius in Qazigund, minus 3.5 degrees Celsius in Kupwara, and minus 0.2 degrees Celsius in Kokernag. *—PTI*

Palghar raid uncovers 9 tonnes of illegal plastic

PALGHAR, 6 DEC

Civic officials in Maharashtra's Palghar district have seized nine tones of banned plastic from a godown in Nalasopara, marking the largest such confiscation by the Vasai Virar City Municipal Corporation (VVMC). Acting on specific information, a VVMC team raided the premises at Sari Compound, Achhole, on Friday and found the prohibited material stored there. The body said it recovered a fine of Rs 5,000 from the godown owners and initiated further action. Under the rules, anyone manufacturing, storing, selling, or using banned plastic faces penalties of Rs 5,000 for a first offence, Rs 10,000 for a second, and Rs 25,000 plus up to three months' imprisonment for repeated violations. *—PTI*

Kerala HC stays arrest of rape accused Cong MLA

Vijayan calls the order a 'natural' & standard procedure

KOCHI/THRISSUR, 6 DEC

The Kerala High Court on Saturday gave interim protection from arrest to expelled Congress MLA **Rahul Mamkootathil** in a case of rape and forced abortion against him.

Justice K Babu said that it will hear Mamkootathil's anticipatory bail plea on 15 December and till then he should not be arrested.

"Petitioner shall not be arrested during the pendency. Post on 15 December, 2025," the court said.

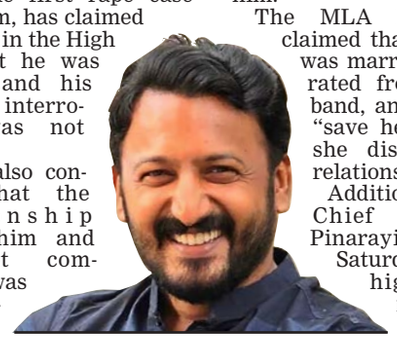
Advocate S Rajeev, appearing for the expelled Congress MLA confirmed the order.

However, Mamkootathil is accused in a second case of sexual assault.

A sessions court in Thiruvananthapuram had on Thursday rejected his plea for anticipatory bail in the first case of rape and forced abortion registered against him last week.

A second rape case was lodged against him on Wednesday based on the complaint of a second woman, a resident of Bengaluru.

Mamkootathil, who has been absconding since the registration of the first rape case against him, has claimed in his plea in the High Court that he was innocent and his custodial interrogation was not required.



He has also contended that the relationship between him and the first complainant was consensual and when it became strained, a complaint was lodged against him.

The MLA has further claimed that the woman was married, but separated from her husband, and in order to "save her own skin" she disowned their relationship.

Additionally, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday called the high court's interim protection to expelled Congress MLA Rahul Mamkootathil from arrest in a rape and forced abortion case as "natural" and standard procedure.

He also noted that when an anticipatory bail application is pending in the court, there is no legal bar to arresting someone.

But the practice in Kerala is to wait for the court's decision on the plea, the CM told reporters here.

"Now, he has approached the High Court with an anticipatory bail plea. The court has accepted it and posted the case for hearing on a date. This is usually the practice in our state," he said. He accused the Congress of actively sheltering Mamkootathil, from the police. *—PTI*

- A sessions court in Thiruvananthapuram had on Thursday rejected his plea for anticipatory bail in the first case of rape and forced abortion registered against him last week.

Passengers waiting at the counters of the IndiGo Airline, at Terminal 1 of the India Gandhi International Airport, in New Delhi, on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

SCR to run spl trains amid Indigo chaos

HYDERABAD, 6 DEC

The South Central Railway on Saturday announced that it would run four special trains to clear the surge in passengers resulting from the large-scale cancellation of IndiGo flights here. The move comes as flyers face disruption and long queues at the airport due to the cancellation.

An SCR press release said it is running special trains to clear the extra rush to Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata from Hyderabad on Saturday.

Rajiv Gandhi International Airport sources said 74 outbound Indigo flights are expected to be cancelled from here on Saturday. Similarly, 70 incoming flights are also likely to be cancelled during the day.

The flight cancellations angered passengers, who thronged the IndiGo counters at the airport.

"This is utter nonsense. Received message that departure has been rescheduled ahead of the scheduled departure, and now, after arriving at the Hyderabad airport, I came to know at the security checkpoint that the Indigo flight has been cancelled," Tarun Singha, a former Ministry of Defence spokesperson, said on X.

On Friday, when IndiGo cancelled over 1,000 flights from across airports, its CEO Pieter Elbers, apologised in a video message to passengers.

Elbers also said that the airline is expecting to operate less than 1,000 flights on Saturday. *—PTI*

Delhi chokes again; AQI remains in 'very poor' category

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

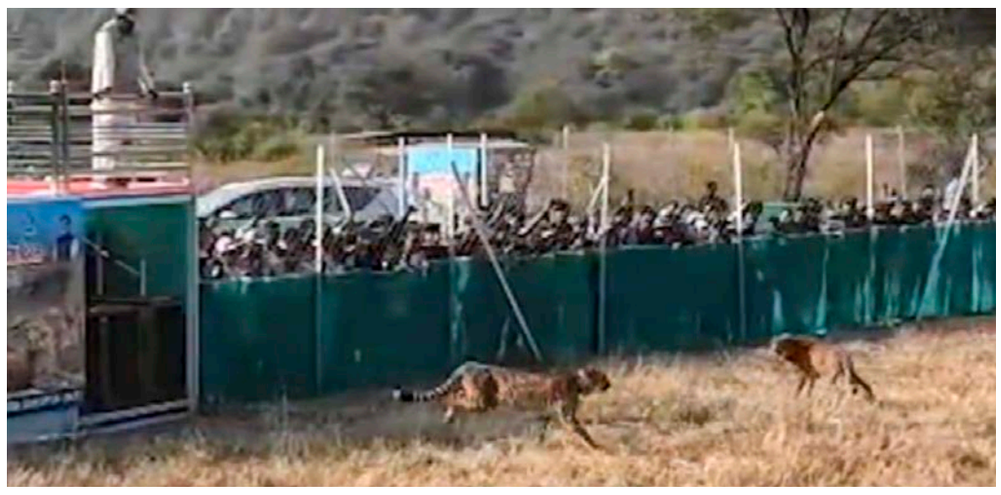
The national capital's air quality remained in the 'very poor' category on Saturday morning, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded at 335 at 9am. Data from the Central Pollution Control Board's Sameer app showed that all 36 monitoring stations across Delhi also reported 'very poor' air quality, with Mundka registering the worst level at 387.

According to CPCB standards, an AQI reading between 0 and 50 is classified as 'good', 51–100 as 'satisfactory', 101–200 as 'moderate', 201–300 as 'poor', 301–400 as 'very poor', and 401–500 as 'severe'.

Delhi's air quality has fluctuated significantly throughout the week. The city reported an AQI of 279 on Sunday, which rose to 304 on Monday. Levels increased sharply to 372 on Tuesday before easing slightly to 342 on Wednesday. The air quality remained in the 'very poor' bracket on Thursday at 304 and continued at 327 on Friday.

Meanwhile, the minimum temperature in Delhi settled at 6.8°C, which is 2.7°C below normal for this time of year, with morning humidity recorded at 95 per cent. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the maximum temperature is likely to reach around 24°C under partly cloudy conditions. *—PTI*

PROJECT CHEETAH



A cheetah cub has been found dead a day after being released into the wild at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh. On the occasion of International Cheetah Day on Thursday, a female cheetah, Veera, and her two cubs were released into the park's free-ranging area. One of the cubs became separated from its mother and sibling during the night and was found dead hours later *PHOTO: PTI*

Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin flags off a ship carrying relief materials from the Chennai port on Saturday *PHOTO: ANI*

Stalin sends ship with aid to cyclone-hit Sri Lanka

CHENNAI, 6 DEC

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Saturday flagged off a ship carrying vital relief supplies, including 300 MT of rice, to Sri Lanka, which has been severely affected by Cyclone 'Ditwah'. The consignment, sent from Chennai port on behalf of the state government, also comprised 300 MT of sugar, 300 MT of lentils, 25 MT of milk powder, along with medicines, blankets, dhotis, sarees and towels.

Officials said the shipment was valued at Rs 1.19 crore. A second consignment, containing 150 MT of rice, 150 MT of sugar and other essential materials, was also dispatched from Tuticorin port on Saturday.

Tamil Nadu had previously extended similar humanitarian assistance to the island nation during its economic crisis in May 2022.

Sri Lanka has been grappling with widespread devastation after Cyclone Ditwah made landfall on 28 November, leading to historic flooding. According to the UN's OCHA, nearly 10 lakh people across all 25 districts were affected, with 212 deaths reported and over 1.8 lakh people housed in 1,094 relief camps. *—PTI*

LANDED SAFELY

Bomb threats disrupt int'l flights at Hyderabad airport

HYDERABAD, 6 DEC

Two international flights at Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport received bomb threat emails, prompting significant safety measures.

British Airways flight 277, en route from Heathrow to Hyderabad, landed safely at 5.25am, with standard safety protocols immediately initiated. In contrast, Kuwait Airways flight 373, travelling from Kuwait to Hyderabad, was forced to return to its departure airport following the threat.

"On 6th December 2025, a bomb threat email was received on the Hyderabad airport customer support ID for flight BA 277. The flight landed safely in Hyderabad at 5.25am. Standard safety protocols were initiated," reported Hyderabad Airport GMR.

Similarly, on 5 December, Air India flight 2879 from Delhi received a bomb threat via email but also landed safely at 8.45pm, with protocols followed thereafter. Earlier incidents included Emirates flight EK526 and an IndiGo flight from Medina, both of which dealt with bomb threats but landed without incident.

This recent series of threats has raised concerns on the safety of flights heading to Hyderabad, leading airport officials to enhance security measures. *—PTI*

British Airways flight 277, en route from Heathrow to Hyderabad, landed safely at 5.25am *PHOTO: PTI*

- In contrast, Kuwait Airways flight 373, travelling from Kuwait to Hyderabad, was forced to return to its departure airport following the threat.

Thane court acquits woman for child's murder

THANE, 6 DEC

A Thane court has acquitted a woman of murdering a 9-year-old girl in 2019, but sentenced her and a co-accused to three years' rigorous imprisonment for destroying evidence connected to the child's death.

The post-mortem report does not indicate the cause of the girl's death, as the body was found decomposed. Therefore, it clearly appears that the prosecution failed to prove how the girl died, Additional Sessions Judge AS Bhagwat said in the judgment on Thursday.

The girl had been brought from Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar to stay with the accused, Anita Rathod, 40, and her now-deceased husband, Prakash Rathod, at Uttan in Thane district under the pretext of providing education to her. *—PTI*

SENDS STRONG MESSAGE

SC meant for common man, asserts CJI Surya Kant

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

Sending a "strong message" that the Supreme Court is meant for commoners, Chief Justice of India **Surya Kant** on Saturday said a predictable timeline and a unified national judicial policy-based early decision of pending cases would be his priority.

Speaking at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit here, the CJI referred to access to justice, and said his priority is to ensure how to reduce the cost of litigation, and how to prescribe a reasonable timeline within which matters are decided. Asked about the independence of the judiciary, Justice Kant referred to the constitutional philosophy of the separation of powers, and said the Constitution has defined the respective roles of the judiciary, the legislature, and the executive.

"My first priority will be a predictable timeline and a unified national judicial policy-based early decision on pending cases. I am not saying elimination of arrears. That will never happen. That should not happen because litigation is an ongoing process. People have faith in the judicial system," the CJI said.

"Cases will be filed but the old cases which are staring on our face need to be tackled and for that, one needs to explore mediation as one of the powerful game-changers," he said.

There will be some reforms in the Supreme Court in the coming days, including on prioritisation of certain litigations, he said. *—PTI*

MANIPUR ASSAM RIFLES SEIZE ₹12.5 CR NARCOTICS

JIRIBAM, 6 DEC

The Assam Rifles on Saturday in collaboration with the Police and CRPF, seized 50,000 Yaba tablets valued at Rs 12.5 crore from a vehicle during an operation in Jiribam. "Acting on specific intelligence on drug trafficking, we successfully intercepted a narcotics consignment," stated the Assam Rifles. Two individuals were apprehended and later handed over to Jiribam Police. The operation reflects Assam Rifles' commitment to combatting NDPS activities and tackling the narco menace in the region. Additionally, joint operations from 23 to 28 November resulted in the apprehension of 11 cadres and the recovery of 14 weapons, explosives, and contraband. *—ANI*

'Zubeen Garg's death probe nears completion'

GUWAHATI, 6 DEC

The investigation into the death of Assam's beloved cultural figure Zubeen Garg is nearing completion, with a charge sheet scheduled for submission on 12 December, according to a senior police official. Garg tragically lost his life while swimming in the sea off Singapore on 19 September.

Munna Prasad Gupta, Special Director General of Police within the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), confirmed during a press conference that the investigation is almost finalised. "The details will be given in the charge sheet," he noted.

So far, seven individuals have been arrested, and over 300 witnesses have been interviewed in relation to Garg's death. The charge sheet will be filed under CID case no. 18/2025, which emerged after nearly 60 FIRs were registered across Assam.

Gupta also mentioned a second case (CID case no. 19/2025) regarding property-related matters is currently ongoing. He refrained from providing further details, adding that more information will be revealed upon the charge sheet's submission.

On 26 November, Assam's Chief Minister described Garg's death as a "plain and simple murder." Those arrested include NEIF chief organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, Garg's manager Siddharth Sharma, and several others connected to the event.

Meanwhile, the Singapore Police Force is conducting its own investigation into the circumstances of Garg's drowning, which preliminary findings have suggested show no evidence of foul play. *—PTI*

CLEAN-UP AFTER CYCLONE

Greater Chennai Corporation workers clean debris from the shore in the aftermath of cyclone 'Ditwah', at Pattinapakkam Beach, in Chennai, on Saturday
PHOTO: PTI

33 years later, Ayodhya still awaits new mosque

Thirty-three years after the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya was razed by a mob on this day in 1992, paving the way for the grand Ram temple at the site, the tentative timeline for the new mosque project rollout at Dhannipur, a village some 25 km from the holy city, could be around April 2026, head of the trust tasked with the project said.

"If all fits in place, and of course, subject to the Ayodhya Development Authority's (ADA) approval of the revised layout plan of the mosque that we hope to submit by December-end, a tentative timeline of the mosque project rollout could be around April 2026," Zufar Faruqi, chairman of the Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation (IICF), the trust tasked with the construction of the mosque-complex project, told PTI.

However, uncertainties still shroud the original mosque plan, more than five years after the Ayodhya district administration, acting on Supreme Court orders, formally allocated five acres of land for it.

Faruqi said the first mosque layout plan was rejected by the ADA, but even before that, the IICF had decided to drop it following objections from the community over its futuristic, modern design and settle for a more conservative, traditional one – one that is near ready.

The ADA's approval is obviously the key first step towards the start of the much-delayed mosque construction, but the IICF is staring at other pressing issues, including the lack of "enough land" at and around the Dhannipur site.

"These are early days. We do wish to make use of the land allotted to us, but should there be a problem in acquiring additional land for the mosque project, the possibility of the entire project being carried out in a phased manner, but at different locations, is there," Faruqi told PTI.

This seemed to be the first official hint at the mosque project coming up in parts, with the likelihood of some construction of the overall complex being done away from the present Dhannipur site that was formally handed over by the state government in August 2020.

The design of the new mosque at Dhannipur, a village 25km away from Ayodhya ***PHOTO: ANI***

After a hotly-contested and prolonged legal battle, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on 9 November, 2019, handed over 2.77 acres to a trust for the construction of a Ram temple at the site and allotted five acres of land at a "prominent site" in Ayodhya for the mosque.

He rejected the theory that the Dhannipur site, being far away from the main Ayodhya city, could have also forced a location change for the mosque and the adjoining complex, including a 500-bed multispecialty hospital, a community kitchen, and educational institutions.

"What's the locus standi of those flagging such issues? One could have still understood had the objections come from the Waqf Board, but why should others have a problem with this site," Faruqi, also the chairman of the UP Sunni Waqf Board, asked.

Criticism and lack of consensus over the project design forced a layout change. Now, delays in securing key clearances have extended the mosque project launch, even as the construction of the Ram temple is now formally complete with the unfurling of a 'Dharm Dhwaj' atop the temple by Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently.

"We estimate that the mosque, along with a 'wazukhana' (ablution area) and associated constructions, alone would cost around Rs 65 crore. We barely have just over Rs 3 crore at the moment," Faruqi said, admitting that both donations and public response to the mosque project were way too subdued.

"The project can start even if we have the initial Rs 10-15 crore in our kitty. That's why we are eager to secure key mandatory clearances, such as the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), as it would enable the trust to seek donations from the overseas community. We are confident that the fund flow too will gather pace after the project takes off," he said.

Faruqi admitted that big donors from the community in the country haven't shown much enthusiasm for the mosque construction.

The mosque debate has also been in the news of late due to some varying political statements.

First, the now-suspended Trinamool Congress MP, Humayun Kabir, stoked passions by announcing a "Babri masjid-style" mosque plan in West Bengal's Murshidabad district.

Days later, Defence Minister and Lucknow MP, Rajnath Singh, stirred both curiosity and criticism with his claim that the country's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, favoured constructing the Babri mosque from government funds. —PTI

SALAR

'Justice system must change to curb corruption'

SALAR UPCLOSE

AKSHITA MEHTA

In recent months, over 120 police personnel in Karnataka have been suspended on charges of corruption and misconduct. In an exclusive conversation, former Bengaluru police commissioner and BJP spokesperson, Bhaskar Rao, speaks candidly about why such cases persist, the deep-rooted systems that encourage corruption, and why meaningful reform remains elusive.

Former Bengaluru police commissioner and BJP spokesperson Bhaskar Rao ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Q.We're seeing frequent suspensions and corruption cases in the police force. Why do such incidents keep increasing instead of reducing?

A.It's shameful. The 124 cases you saw are only the reported ones; the actual number is five or six times higher. Everything depends on leadership. If the leadership is weak, corruption grows, just like poor housekeeping attracts filth. When the environment is dirty, insects come. Only a strong leader can keep the system clean. If political leaders misuse the police, force them into wrongdoings, or push them beyond limits, the consequences inevitably surface. And many cases are never even reported.

Q.By leadership, do you mean political leadership or senior police leadership?

A.Both. Commissioners and department heads are part of the government machinery. In many cases, postings are purchased. If someone pays money to be posted to a station, they will try to recover it through illegal means. Some manage it without getting caught, others get exposed. The corruption chain runs from top to bottom.

Q. We often hear that even small tasks, traffic violations, shop inspections, even post-mortem reports attract bribes. Why is this so widespread?

A. Bribery has made the police insensitive. But remember, a constable taking 100 looks big because he deals directly with citizens. Much bigger deals happen inside the stone walls of Vidhana Soudha - crores exchanged, decisions fixed. When officers compete for postings by offering "so many lakhs or crores," they have no choice but to recover that money from the public. Case registration, NCRs, post-mortems - everything becomes monetised.

Q.Did this happen during your tenure as Commissioner as well?

A.Yes, of course. But I did not post those officers; seniors and the government control postings at that level. When postings are bought, loyalty becomes questionable. My job was to maintain law and order, and I had to manage political pressure, and still run the show.

Q.What about custodial deaths in jails, police harassment, and brutality?

A.Harassment stems from the need to recover money or from low pay. Custodial deaths were more common earlier. Today, technology, CCTV, mobile data, and GPS have improved detection and reduced the need for physical interrogation. Brutality happens because officers are constantly dealing with repeated offenders and negative situations. Over time, they become hardened.

Q.Why are marginalised communities overrepresented in jails?

A.Because of inequality, lack of education, poor legal support, and inability to hire good lawyers. The rich rarely face the same consequences. They commit white-collar crimes, manipulate systems, and get away. Poor people get trapped in petty cases and cannot defend themselves.

Q.Videos from prisons show inmates getting alcohol, phones, and luxury items. What is happening inside jails?

A.Only 1% enjoy such luxuries - those who can pay. They bribe prison staff for food, clothes, phones, and alcohol. But remember, police have nothing to do with prisons. Once judicial custody begins, the judicial department takes over.

Q.So the entire criminal justice system needs reform?

A.Absolutely. Police investigation, trials, prosecution, and correctional facilities all need an overhaul. Trials take years; conviction rates are low. We lack judges, prosecutors, and investigators. Justice must be faster.

Q.During Covid-19, allegations were made against you about permitting certain activities for bribes.

A.Those allegations were false. I told the Chief Minister to remove me if they were true. He overruled them. Even the Deputy Chief Minister later realised he had acted on hearsay. As for the leaked phone conversation, it was recorded and made viral by someone I trusted. That's all. —*Salar News*

Scan to watch full interview on Salar YouTube channel

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

What Netflix's acquisition of Warner Bros means for the movies

Netflix's deal to acquire Warner Bros, one of Hollywood's oldest movie studios, poses seismic shifts to the entertainment industry and the future of moviegoing.

As one of the remaining "big five" studios, the 102-year-old Warner Bros is an essential part of movie theatre business.

The studio currently boasts three of the top five earning films, including 'A Minecraft Movie' in first place, 'Superman' and 'Sinners', as well as the Oscar frontrunner, 'One Battle After Another'.

There are more questions than answers about how ownership from a streaming giant would change things for Warner Bros. It's not even clear if it will pass antitrust scrutiny, or, if it does, what the details will look like.

Here are some things to know, and lingering questions, in the wake of the news.

Will Warner Bros. continue releasing movies in theatres?

Yes, but it might change as well. For starters, it'll be at least 12 to 18 months before the deal officially goes through and moviegoers can expect essentially business as usual until then.

Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos said Friday that they will "continue to support" a "life cycle that starts in the movie theatre" for Warner Bros movies. But he also commented that he doesn't think that "long exclusive windows" are consumer friendly.

With the rise of streaming, and especially in the pandemic era, studios experimented with different theatrical windows. For many years, a 90-day theatrical window was standard, but now it's closer to 45 days and often a film-by-film decision.

Netflix and movie theatres

Netflix does release some films theatrically, but not usually more than a few weeks before they hit streaming. Sometimes that's to qualify for awards eligibility, sometimes it's a gesture to top filmmakers.

This year those releases included Guillermo del Toro's 'Frankenstein', Kathryn Bigelow's 'A House of Dynamite' and Noah Baumbach's 'Jay Kelly'.

Major chains like AMC and Regal had refused to program Netflix releases until 2022, when enthusiasm for the 'Knives Out' movie 'Glass Onion' helped break the stalemate.

Earlier this year, 'KPop Demon Hunters' unofficially topped the box office charts, earning nearly USD 20 million from a one-weekend run in theatres two full months after it debuted on the streamer.

Netflix also owns and operates several movie theatres.

What does it mean for movie theatres?

So much of this depends on the details, but Cinema United president and CEO Michael O'Leary said hours before the news broke that it posed "an unprecedented threat to the global exhibition business".

Theatrical exhibition has not fully recovered since the pandemic. Before 2020, the annual domestic box office regularly surpassed USD 11 billion. Since then it has only surpassed USD 9 billion once, in 2023, driven largely by "Barbie", a Warner Bros. release.

How will top filmmakers react?

It's too early to tell, but Warner Bros. has always prided itself on being one of the premier homes for top filmmakers, this year releasing films from Paul Thomas Anderson, Ryan Coogler and James Gunn.

Much likely depends on whether robust theatrical releases will be honoured — many of these filmmakers are vocal champions of the theatrical experience and may not stick around if it shifts.

The studio's controversial decision to release films simultaneously in theatres and on HBO Max in 2021 during the pandemic led to a rift with Christopher Nolan, who after making eight major films with the company, including the 'Dark Knight' trilogy, partnered with Universal to make his next two films, 'Oppenheimer' and next year's 'The Odyssey'.

Will HBO Max and Netflix become one service?

That's also unclear. If the two platforms remain separate subscriptions, there may be "bundling" options, as with Disney and Hulu. Netflix on Friday said that the addition of HBO and HBO Max programming will give its members "even more high-quality titles from which to choose" and "optimise its plans for consumers."

The Warner Bros. library of films includes classics like 'Casablanca' and 'Citizen Kane' as well as the 'Harry Potter' movies. —*PTI*

Warner Bros boasts of three of the top five earning films this year including 'Sinners', as well as the Oscar frontrunner, 'One Battle After Another'. The Warner Bros library of films includes classics such as 'Casablanca' ***PHOTO: WARNER BROS***

PHOTO: FREEPIK

NY woman booked for smuggling Indians into US

PLATTSBURGH, 6 DEC

A 42-year-old woman, Stacey Taylor, has been charged with participating in an international smuggling conspiracy involving illegal entry of individuals primarily from India into the United States via Canada. Taylor appeared in court this week following a federal grand jury indictment in October. US Border Patrol agents intercepted her vehicle in January 2025, discovering four foreign nationals inside, including three from India. Investigations revealed she had engaged in multiple smuggling ventures prior. Taylor faces charges of conspiring to engage in alien smuggling and four counts of smuggling for profit. If convicted, she faces a mandatory minimum penalty of five years for each count, with additional time for repeat offences. *—PTI*

Bolsonaro's son to run for Brazil Presidency in 2026

SAO PAULO, 6 DEC

Flávio Bolsonaro, the eldest son of former president Jair Bolsonaro, announced on Friday that he will represent their political group as a candidate for the 2026 presidential elections. Following his father's imprisonment last month for attempting a coup and barring from running until 2030, Flávio stated, "It is with great responsibility that I confirm the decision of Brazil's greatest political and moral leader, Jair Messias Bolsonaro." He will challenge President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who seeks a fourth nonconsecutive term. Although there were considerations for other candidates, such as Sao Paulo Gov. Tarcísio de Freitas, Flávio remains pivotal in the far-right coalition that his father continues to influence from prison. *—PTI*

WFP warns of severe hunger crisis in Cameroon

YAOUNDÉ, 6 DEC

The World Food Programme (WFP) issued a stark warning on Friday regarding the escalating hunger crisis in Cameroon, urging for a minimum of USD 67 million in funding to prevent catastrophic levels of food insecurity. WFP representative Gianluca Ferrera stated, "Without this funding, most of the activities that WFP and partners have been implementing will have to stop." The country is grappling with multiple crises, including a Boko Haram insurgency, leading to over 3.3 million people in need of aid. Starting in January, 52,000 children will lose school meals. WFP's funding this year is only USD 20 million, down from USD 106 million in 2022. *—PTI*

Mexico freezes Miss Universe co-head's bank account

MEXICO CITY, 6 DEC

Mexico's anti-money laundering agency has frozen the bank accounts of Raúl Rocha Cantú, the Mexican co-owner of the Miss Universe Organisation, as part of an investigation into drug, fuel and arms trafficking, a federal official said Friday. The Financial Intelligence Unit ordered the freeze amid growing controversies surrounding the pageant. Last week, a Thai court issued an arrest warrant for the organisation's Thai co-owner in a separate fraud case, while this year's competition — won by Miss Mexico Fatima Bosch — drew allegations of rigging. The Miss Universe Organisation has not commented on the case. Mexican prosecutors said Rocha Cantú has been under investigation since November 2024 for suspected organised crime activities. *—PTI*

Pak, Afghan trade fire along Chaman border

Islamabad, Kabul blame each other for escalating tensions

ISLAMABAD/ KABUL, 6 DEC

Pakistan and Afghanistan exchanged heavy fired at the key Chaman border, according to a media report on Saturday

Afghani media said four people were killed and four others injured in the country's Spin Boldak district of Kandahar. Pakistan did not report any casualties.

Officials from both sides accused each other of instigating the flare-up late on Friday night across the border in the Balochistan province.

While Pakistani officials said that Afghan forces had fired mortar shells on the Badani area, Afghan Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid claimed it was Pakistan that launched an attack on Spin Boldak, alleging that their forces were responding.

Pakistan's official sources told Dawn that Pakistani forces retaliated against the Afghan aggression and returned fire.

Officials said the exchange of fire started around 10pm on Friday night at the Chaman Border (Friendship Gate) *PHOTO: ANI*

There were also unverified reports of fighting on the Chaman-Kandahar highway.

A senior official in Quetta said that the exchange of fire started around 10 pm and continued until late at night.

The Chaman border crossing, also known as Friendship Gate, connects Balochistan province to Afghanistan's Kandahar.

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have deteriorated amidst regular allegations by Pakistan regarding the failure of the Afghan regime to deny safe havens to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan terrorists.

The two countries had agreed on a ceasefire following tensions last month, but the Foreign Office said last month that technically there was no truce as it was contingent on the Afghan Taliban stopping terrorist attacks in Pakistan, which they had failed to do.

Meanwhile, Pakistan security forces gunned down nine terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in two separate intelligence-based operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in northwest Pakistan, the military's media wing said. *—Agencies*

'PEACE DEPENDS ON RUSSIA'

Russia unleashes drone volley amid peace talks

Russia used 653 drones and 51 missiles in the wide-reaching overnight attack on Ukraine *PHOTO: X @ZELENSKYYUA*

KYIV, 6 DEC

Russia unleashed a major missile and drone barrage on Ukraine overnight into Saturday, after US and Ukrainian officials said they'll meet on Saturday for a third day of talks aimed at ending the nearly 4-year-old war.

Russia used 653 drones and 51 missiles in the wide-reaching attack, which triggered air raid alerts across the country and came as Ukraine marked Armed Forces Day, the country's air force said Saturday morning.

Ukrainian forces shot down and neutralised 585 drones and 30 missiles, the air force said, adding that 29 locations were struck.

At least eight people were wounded in the attacks, Ukrainian Minister of Internal Affairs Ihor Klymenko said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that energy facilities were the main targets of the attacks, also noting that a drone strike had "burned down" the train station in the city of Fastiv, located in the Kyiv region.

Meanwhile, Russia's Ministry of Defence said its air defences had shot down 116 Ukrainian drones over Russian territory overnight into Saturday. Russian news said Ukraine struck Russia's Ryazan Oil Refinery.

The latest round of attacks came as US President Donald Trump's advisers - US special envoy Steve Witkoff, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner - and Ukrainian officials - Rustem Umerov and Andriy Hnatov - said they'll meet for a third day of talks on Saturday, after making progress on finding agreement on a security framework for postwar Ukraine.

Following Friday's talks, the two sides offered the sober assessment that any "real progress toward any agreement" depends "on Russia's readiness to show serious commitment." *—PTI*

'Chernobyl shield doesn't stop radiation'

The protective shield over the Chernobyl nuclear plant in Ukraine no longer blocks radiation, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said on Friday. The plant was hit by an alleged Russian drone in February, which caused damage to the protective cover of the plant. The Chernobyl nuclear plant was closed in 2000 after the 1986 disaster, which was one of the world's worst nuclear tragedies.

Trump gets FIFA peace prize

WASHINGTON, 6 DEC

US President Donald Trump was awarded the new FIFA peace prize on Friday at the 2026 World Cup draw — giving the spectacle to set matchups for the quadrennial soccer tournament even more of a Trumpian flair.

Trump, who has openly campaigned for the Nobel Peace Price, had been heavily favoured to win the newly created FIFA prize. He and FIFA President Gianni Infantino are close allies, and Infantino had made clear that he thought Trump should have won the Nobel for his efforts to broker a ceasefire in Gaza.

Infantino said it was a "beautiful medal for you that you can wear everywhere you want to go. Trump promptly placed the medal around his neck. The certificate that Infantino handed Trump recognises the US President for his actions to "promote peace and unity around the world."

"This is your prize, this is your peace prize," Infantino said.

President Donald Trump was presented the FIFA Peace Prize by FIFA President Gianni Infantino during the draw for the 2026 soccer World Cup, at the Kennedy Center in Washington *PHOTO: PTI*

Trump thanked his family, including his wife, first lady Melania Trump, and praised the leaders of the other two host nations — Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum — in his brief remarks, saying the coordination with the countries has been "outstanding."

"This is truly one of the great honours of my life," Trump said.

The Nobel Peace Prize this year was awarded to Venezuelan Opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, who dedicated the honour to Trump. *—PTI*

ICE arrests 12 people in Minneapolis

Federal agents have arrested a dozen people in Minneapolis since launching an enforcement operation this week primarily focused on Somali immigrants living unlawfully in the US, but fewer than half of those detained are Somali. Of those, six are Mexican nationals, five are from Somalia and one is from El Salvador. Minneapolis-St. Paul, which has the nation's largest Somali community, is the latest area targeted by the Trump administration for mass deportations, following operations in Chicago, Los Angeles and Charlotte, North Carolina. Officials said they intend to arrest up to 5,000 people.

RSF DRONE STRIKES KILL 50 PEOPLE IN SUDAN KINDERGARTEN: DOCS

CAIRO, 6 DEC

A drone attack by the Sudanese paramilitary forces hit a kindergarten in south-central Sudan, killing at least 50 people, including 33 children, a doctors' group said.

Paramedics on the scene in the town of Kalogi in South Kordofan state were targeted in "a second unexpected attack," the group said in a statement late Friday.

The death toll is expected to be higher, but communication blackouts in the area have made it difficult to report casualties.

Thursday's attack is the latest in the fighting between the paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), and the Sudanese military, known as the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), who have been at war for over two years. The RSF is now concentrating in the oil-rich Kordofan states.

FUEL EXPLOSIONS

Reported drone strikes by the SAF hit a massive fuel contingent. While the SAF did not claim credit for the attack, its supporters hailed the strike as disrupting the RSF's operations, independent Sudan War Monitor reported. Videos showed thick black smoke.

SUDAN DISTANCES ITSELF FROM MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

Sudan is seeking to distance itself form the Muslim Brotherhood. The UAE, which allegedly backs the RSF, has branded the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation. The movement has played a significant role in Egypt and Sudan.

General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the Commander-in-Chief of the SAF told Al-Arabiya news channel that the movement was toppled by Sudan in 2018. "We will not allow them... to return under any circumstances," *—Agencies*

International body for governing Gaza to be announced by year-end

DOHA, 6 DEC

An international body tasked with governing the Gaza Strip under the next phase of the US-brokered ceasefire is expected to be announced by the end of the year, an Arab official and a Western diplomat said Friday.

The authority – known as the Board of Peace and chaired by US President Donald Trump – will oversee Gaza's reconstruction under a two-year, renewable UN mandate.

It will include about a dozen other Middle Eastern and Western leaders, the Arab official and the Western diplomat said.

A committee of Palestinian technocrats who will run the day-to-day administration of post-war Gaza will also be announced, the two said.

The diplomat said the announcement about this is likely when Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meet later this month.

Tents sheltering displaced Palestinians stand amid the destruction left by the Israeli offensive in Gaza City *PHOTO: PTI*

The ceasefire deal also calls for an armed International Stabilisation Force to maintain security and ensure the disarming of Hamas, a key demand of Israel.

The announcement would be a significant step forward in implementing Trump's 20-point plan for the territory devastated by Israel's two-year campaign against Hamas.

However, Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said at a conference in Qatar that "what we have (in Gaza) is a pause. We cannot consider it yet a ceasefire." *—PTI*

10 die as car ploughs into French crowd at Christmas event

GUADELOUPE, 6 DEC

In a devastating incident in France's Sainte-Anne, Guadeloupe, a vehicle drove into a crowd preparing for a Christmas event on Friday evening, resulting in at least 19 victims, including 10 fatalities. Reports from Radio Caraïbes Internationale Guadeloupe indicate that three individuals are in serious condition following the tragedy, which occurred at Schoelcher Square, adjacent to the town hall and church.

The cause of the accident remains unclear, prompting an ongoing investigation. Witnesses suggest that the driver may have experienced a medical episode while behind the wheel, though this theory has yet to be confirmed. The driver reportedly remained at the scene following the collision.

Emergency services, including firefighters and police, have been deployed to assist at the scene. *—Agencies*

DECORATED THE WORLD

Celebrated architect Frank Gehry dies at 96

LOS ANGELES, 6 DEC

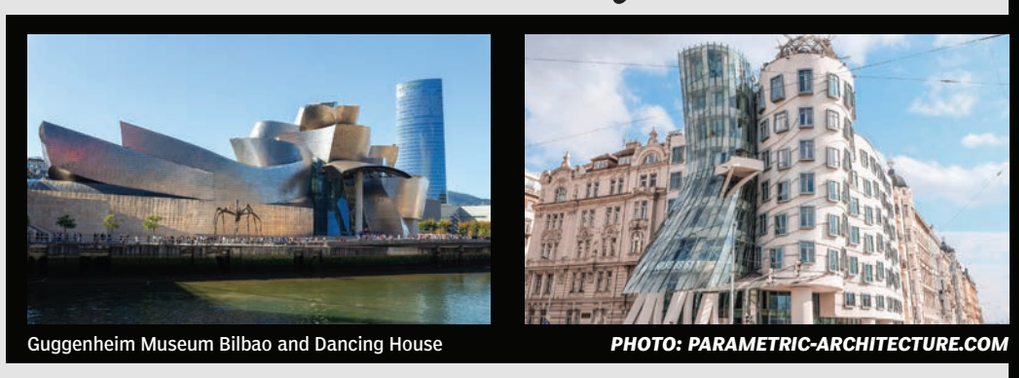
Frank Gehry, 96, who designed some of the most imaginative buildings and achieved worldwide acclaim, has died.

Gehry died Friday at his home in Santa Monica after a brief respiratory illness, said Meaghan Lloyd, chief of staff at Gehry Partners LLP.

Gehry's fascination with modern pop art led to the creation of striking buildings. Among his masterpieces are the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain; The Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles and Berlin's DZ Bank Building.

He also designed an extension of Facebook's Northern California headquarters.

Gehry was awarded every major prize architecture has, including the field's top honour, the Pritzker Prize.

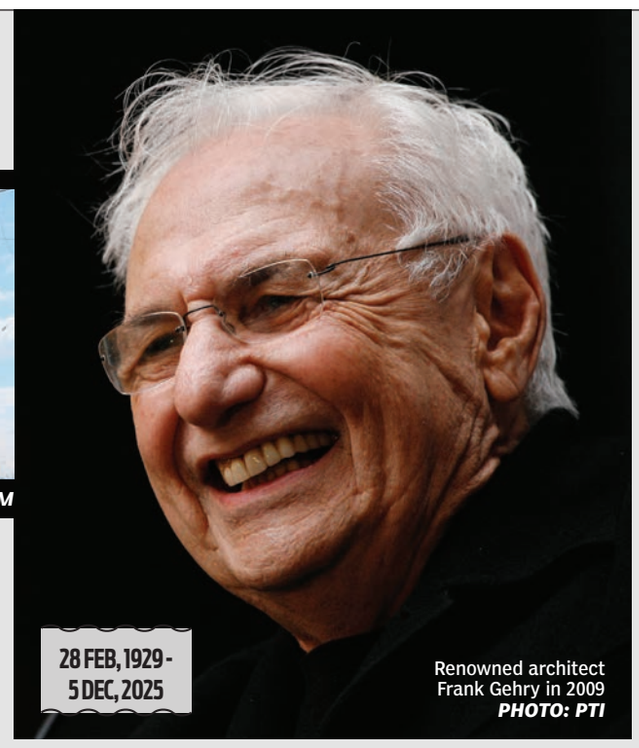


Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and Dancing House *PHOTO: PARAMETRIC-ARCHITECTURE.COM*

Other honours are the Royal Institute of British Architects gold medal, the Americans for the Arts lifetime achievement award, and the Companion of the Order of Canada.

Not everyone was a fan of Gehry. Some naysayers dismissed it as not much more than gigantic reincarnations of the little scrap-wood cities he said he spent hours building when he was growing up in Timmins in Ontario.

Born Ephraim Owen Goldberg in Toronto on 28 Feb, 1929, he moved to Los Angeles with his family in 1947, eventually becoming a US citizen. As an adult, he changed his name after he first wife told him antisemitism might be holding back his career. *—PTI*



Renowned architect Frank Gehry in 2009 *PHOTO: PTI*

Customs simplification will be next major reform, says FM

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

Ahead of the upcoming Budget for 2026, Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** announced that customs simplification would be a key focus for the government's reform agenda.

Speaking at the HT Leadership Summit, she stated, "We need a complete overhaul of customs... we need to have customs simplified for people to feel that it is not cumbersome to comply... need to make it more transparent."

The government has implemented various reforms, including rate rationalisation for income tax and Goods and Services Tax (GST), aimed at enhancing consumer spending by providing more disposable income to the public. She emphasised the importance of aligning customs practices with the transparency seen in income tax, indicating that proposed reforms will include comprehensive customs duty rate rationalisation. Announcements regarding these changes are expected in the upcoming Budget, to be presented in February 2026.

The Finance Minister highlighted recent efforts to decrease customs duties, with a steady reduction over the past two years. She noted, "In those few items where our rates are considered to be over the optimal level, we have to bring them down as well. Customs is my next big cleaning-up assignment."

This year's Budget included the elimination of seven additional customs tariff rates on industrial goods, reducing the total number of tariff slabs to eight, including a zero rate.

On the topic of the depreciating rupee, which recently breached the 90-a-dollar threshold for the first time, Sitharaman expressed confidence that it would find its natural level. The rupee has fallen approximately 5 per cent against the US dollar in 2025.

Despite these challenges, Sitharaman is optimistic, forecasting GDP growth of 7 per cent or more for the current financial year. *—PTI*

Biocon, Biocon Biologics to merge at $5.5 billion

Biocon will acquire the remaining stake in Biocon Biologics

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

Biotechnology major Biocon on Saturday said it will fully integrate Biocon Biologics with itself, in a deal valuing the biologics unit at USD 5.5 billion.

As part of the transaction, Biocon will acquire the remaining stake in Biocon Biologics Ltd from Serum Institute Life Sciences, Tata Capital Growth Fund II and Activ Pine LLP through a share swap, valuing Biocon Biologics at USD 5.5 billion, the Bengaluru-based company said in a regulatory filing.

The share-swap ratio has been fixed at 70.28 Biocon shares for every 100 Biocon Biologics shares, at a share price of Rs 405.78 per Biocon share, it added.

Further, Biocon will acquire the residual stake held by Mylan Inc (Viatris) for a total consideration of USD 815 million, of which USD 400 million will be payable in cash and USD 415 million through a share swap, it added.

Biocon Biologics ranks among the top five global biosimilar players by revenue, with 10 commercialised products ***PHOTO: ANI***

Biocon is constituting a Governance Council chaired by Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and a transition and integration management committee, led by Biocon Biologics CEO and MD Shreehas Tambe, to ensure a seamless integration.

The company said its board has also approved raising to Rs 4,500 crore in additional capital through a qualified institutional placement, subject to shareholder approval.

The proceeds of the QIP will be primarily utilised to pay the cash component to Viatris.

"The integration of Biocon Biologics into Biocon Ltd represents the next chapter in our evolution. Strategically, Biocon will be one of the few companies offering both biosimilars and generics at a global scale," Biocon Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw said.

- This integration enables Biocon to harness the combined strengths of its generics and biosimilars businesses across countries, the company stated.

This integration enables Biocon to harness the combined strengths of its generics and biosimilars businesses across countries, the company stated.

Biocon Biologics ranks among the top five global biosimilar players by revenue, with 10 commercialised products across key markets, while Biocon's generics business offers over 90 products. *—PTI*

$72 BILLION DEAL

Multiplex body worried over Netflix buying Warner Bros

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

The Multiplex Association of India (MAI) has expressed serious concerns regarding Netflix's proposed acquisition of Warner Bros Discovery, highlighting that it poses a significant competitive and economic threat to India's theatrical and film economy.

In a statement on Saturday, MAI noted that the cash-and-stock deal, valued at USD 72 billion, would see Netflix acquire Warner Bros, renowned for its major contributions to global cinema. This acquisition includes Warner's television and motion picture divisions, along with its HBO Max streaming service and DC Studios, and is anticipated to conclude following Warner's separation of Discovery Global in the third quarter of 2026.

- This acquisition includes Warner's television and motion picture divisions, along with its HBO Max streaming service and DC Studios, and is anticipated to conclude following Warner's separation of Discovery Global in the third quarter of 2026.

MAI President Kamal Gianchandani stated, "Netflix has consistently made it clear through its limited and highly restrictive approach to theatrical releases that it does not believe in the cinema-first model. If this acquisition proceeds, the risk is two-fold: a meaningful reduction in high-quality content for cinemas and the potential for shortened or non-existent theatrical windows."

He further asserted that Warner Bros has been a crucial partner to Indian cinemas, helping to sustain a diverse release calendar with both local and global titles. Gianchandani warned that the acquisition would harm revenues, limit consumer choice, and undermine the broader film production, distribution, and exhibition ecosystem in India. MAI is dedicated to voicing these concerns to regulatory authorities in India and abroad, emphasising that cinemas in the country serve as vital cultural hubs and economic contributors. Established in 2002, MAI represents over 11 cinema chains and operates more than 550 multiplexes across India. *—PTI*

Fake bank case: Chargesheet filed against Reliance Power

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a chargesheet against Reliance Power Ltd., led by businessman **Anil Ambani**, along with ten others, in a money laundering case involving an allegedly fake bank guarantee of Rs 68 crore intended to secure a tender.

The accused also include former Reliance Power CFO Ashok Kumar Pal, subsidiaries Reliance NU BESS Ltd. and Rosa Power Supply Company Ltd., and executive Punit Narendra Garg, among others.

The case centres on a bank guarantee submitted to the Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI) on behalf of Reliance NU BESS, formerly known as Maharashtra Energy Generation Limited.

The ED claims that Reliance Group officials were aware of the guarantee's fraudulent nature.

"Fraudulent endorsements" were submitted to SECI using a spoofed SBI email ID, and upon detection of the fraud, the group attempted to arrange a genuine bank guarantee from IDBI Bank, which was rejected as it was submitted past the due date.

The chargesheet further alleges that to divert blame, the Reliance Group filed a complaint against the shell company, Biswal Tradelink Private Limited, and its MD, Partha Sarathi Biswal, who has since been arrested.

In addition, ED has attached assets worth Rs 5.15 crore in connection with investigation.

The allegations detail the elaborate scheme, where Reliance Power purportedly paid Rs 5.40 crore to Biswal Tradelink for creating a façade of a legitimate transaction. *—PTI*

TWO PARALLEL NEGOTIATIONS

India, US to hold 3-day trade talks from 10 Dec: Sources

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

India and the United States will reportedly begin a three-day talk in Delhi, regarding the first phase of their proposed bilateral trade agreement on 10 December.

During the crucial visit, India and the US will finalise the first tranche of their trade pact, with the US delegation led by Deputy USTR Rick Switzer. This marks the officials' second trip since the US imposed a 25 per cent tariff and 25 per cent penalty on Indian goods over India's purchase of Russian crude oil.

US officials last visited India on 16 September, followed by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal's trips to the US in May and again on 22 September for trade talks. The pact's chief negotiators are Assistant USTR for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch for the US and Commerce Department Joint Secretary Darpan Jain for India.

India and the US are having two parallel negotiations, one on a framework trade deal to address tariffs and another on a comprehensive trade deal. Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal is hopeful of reaching a framework trade deal with the US within the year, which should address the tariff issue to the benefit of Indian exporters. *—PTI*

Wakefit mobilises Rs 580 cr from anchor investors

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Home and furnishings company Wakefit Innovations Ltd has collected Rs 580 crore from anchor investors, days before its initial share-sale opens for public subscription.

According to a circular, Wakefit has allotted 29,743,590 equity shares to anchor investors at Rs 195 each, raising Rs 580 crore. The public issue includes a fresh issue worth up to Rs 377.18 crore and an OFS of 4,67,54,405 shares valued at about Rs 912 crore, bringing the total issue size to Rs 1,289 crore.

Prominent investors include HDFC LI Insurance, Bajaj LI and Prudential and Hong Kong. Additionally, domestic mutual funds like HDFC MF, Axis MF Tata MF, HSBC MF and Mahindra Manulife MF were also allocated shares.

Wakefit plans to use Rs 31 crore to open 117 new COCO-Regular Stores, Rs 15.4 crore to buy equipment and machinery, and Rs 161.4 crore for lease and licence fees for existing stores.

Wakefit will make its stock market debut on 15 December. *—PTI*

Circular economy to increase dairy farmers' income by 20%, says Amit Shah

SANADAR, 6 DEC

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah has expressed confidence that the implementation of a circular economy model across India will increase dairy farmers' income by 20 per cent over the next five years.

Speaking at an event with cattle rearers from Banas Dairy in Gujarat's Vav-Tharad district, Shah inaugurated the dairy's bio-CNG and fertiliser plant and laid the groundwork for a new milk powder plant.

He praised Banas Dairy for successfully developing a circular economy model in the dairy sector, which allows farmers to generate additional income by transforming cattle dung into biogas and bio-fertiliser.

"So far, our cooperative dairies have succeeded in procuring milk from farmers and redistributing income from milk products. Now, the focus must shift to the circular economy," he noted.

Shah highlighted that a concrete plan for this model will arise from a meeting with MPs later that evening. He announced that in January 2026, leaders from major cooperative dairies will visit Banas Dairy to gain insights into its initiatives, given it is Asia's largest dairy with a turnover of Rs 24,000 crore.

He emphasised the importance of diversifying dairy products, stating, "If we focus on those products in demand globally, dairy farmers can earn extra income."

Shah assured attendees that the government has established systems to finance and support the adoption of this model, including the leather industry from naturally deceased cattle hides. *—PTI*

ICICI Prudential AMC to launch IPO on 12 December

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company (AMC), a subsidiary of ICICI Bank, is preparing to launch its initial public offering (IPO) on 12 December.

Market sources indicate the issue size is anticipated to be around Rs 10,000 crore. The offering will conclude on 16 December, with bidding for anchor investors set for 11 December, as per the red herring prospectus.

The IPO is solely an offer for sale (OFS) of 4.89 crore equity shares by promoter Prudential Corporation Holdings, with no fresh issue component. Consequently, ICICI Prudential AMC will not receive capital from the sale; proceeds will go to the selling shareholder.

Currently, ICICI Bank holds a 51 per cent stake in the asset management firm, while Prudential Corporation Holdings owns the remaining 49 per cent. *—PTI*

SPACE WEATHER IN FOCUS

Airbus fleet recall: Experts question solar flare theory

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

Aerospace giant Airbus recalling about half of its global fleet over a commercial plane's sudden altitude drop brings into sharp focus the importance of space weather in flight safety, even as experts raise questions about the company's analysis that a powerful solar flare caused damage to flight software.

An A320 aircraft unexpectedly lost altitude during a Mexico-US flight on 30 October, injuring 15 passengers. In a statement on 28 November, Airbus linked the incident to damage suffered by flight software due to "intense solar radiation".

Experts said intense cosmic radiation can cause "single-event upsets", which can corrupt data, but added that they found no significant solar event of concern on 30 October.

An A320 aircraft unexpectedly lost altitude during a Mexico-US flight on 30 October, injuring 15 passengers ***PHOTO: WIKICOMMONS***

Dibyendu Nandi, a space weather expert at the Centre of Excellence in Space Sciences India (CESSI) and Professor at the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER), Kolkata, indicated in a post on X that there was no major space weather event that day.

"It is certainly not yet clear what transpired to lead to the fleet recall and updates. Assuming all other possibilities have been ruled out by Airbus aircraft carefully, I would lean towards cumulative space weather impacts, or a very rare energetic particle enhancement from galactic sources, manifesting during that specific 30 October, 2025, Mexico-US flight," Nandi told PTI.

- Solar storms periodically occur as the Sun's internal dynamo process, which creates its magnetic field, intensifies and weakens.

Previous "impacts" may have somehow escaped scrutiny from routine ground checks, Nandi added.

Solar storms periodically occur as the Sun's internal dynamo process, which creates its magnetic field, intensifies and weakens.

A cycle of solar activity typically lasts 11 years. The Sun is now said to be at the peak of its heightened phase of solar activity in the current ongoing 'solar cycle 25'. *—PTI*

Indus Appstore partners with Motorola India

NEW DELHI, 6 DEC

Indus Appstore, a mobile app store, is partnering with Motorola. This move will make India's homegrown marketplace available on all Motorola devices across India.

Indus Appstore offers Indian consumers a meaningful alternative in the app ecosystem, designed specifically around user preferences within the country's diverse cultural context.

The platform is committed to reaching every Indian smartphone user by offering the experience in 12 Indian languages and English, complete with an AI-powered voice search feature that forgoes the need to type out complex vernacular compositions.

For developers, the PhonePe-owned app store creates a favourable environment with its fair app store policies.

It reduces dependency on a single-source distribution and has paved the way for a viable digital distribution service alternative. *—ANI*

- For developers, the PhonePe-owned app store creates a favourable environment with its fair app store policies.

X/@OLYMPIC

Summer Olympians begin torch relay for Milan Cortina

ROME, 6 DEC

Olympic swimming champion Gregorio Paltrinieri and fellow Summer athletes started off the torch relay for the Milan Cortina Winter Games on Saturday, which marked exactly two months before the Feb. 6 opening ceremony. Paltrinieri carried the sleek torch around the track of the statue-lined Stadio dei Marmi at the Foro Italico to begin a trek covering 12,000 kilometers (nearly 7,500 miles) that will wind its way through all 110 Italian provinces before reaching Milan's San Siro Stadium for the opening ceremony. "It's a pleasure to be part of the Olympic movement, even if it's the Winter Olympics," Paltrinieri said. In all, there will be 10,001 torch bearers. Giancarlo Peris, the final torchbearer from the 1960 Olympics in Rome, carried out the Olympic flame in a lantern to get the proceedings going. —*PTI*

Suruchi clinches gold, Sainyam silver

DOHA, 6 DEC

Talented shooter Suruchi Singh came up with yet another commanding performance to clinch the women's 10m air pistol gold, while compatriot Sainyam took the silver as India made a big splash on the opening day of the season-ending ISSF World Cup Final, here Saturday. After a disappointing outing by the 10m rifle exponents earlier during the day, Suruchi lit up the day by firing a superb 245.1 in the final on her way to the top podium finish, while former junior world champion Sainyam made it a gold-silver finish for the country with a score of 243.3. Double Olympic bronze-medallist Manu Bhaker, who also made it to the final, finished fifth, tallying 179.2.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@NBA

Durant becomes 8th player to reach 31,000 points

NEW YORK, 6 DEC

Kevin Durant picked up 28 points to become the eighth player in NBA history to score 31,000 career points as the Houston Rockets rolled to a 117-98 win over the Phoenix Suns on Friday night. It was Durant's first game against his former team since a blockbuster seven-team trade that sent Jalen Green and Dillon Brooks to the Suns. Durant missed Houston's 114-92 win at Phoenix on Nov. 24 for personal reasons. Amen Thompson scored a season-high 31 to help the Rockets to their fifth victory in six games.—*PTI*

Max Verstappen claims pole for F1 title decider

DUBAI, 6 DEC

Red Bull's Max Verstappen outgunned his two title rivals from McLaren to take pole position for the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix and strengthen his bid for a fifth successive title. Championship leader Lando Norris, who is 12 points ahead of Verstappen and will win the title if he finishes on the podium, will start alongside him on the front row with McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri in third. George Russell, who was quickest in third practice earlier in the day in his Mercedes, set the early pace in qualifying and will start from fourth with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc fifth. Grid position has been crucial at Abu Dhabi, with each of the last 12 races won by cars starting on the front row.—*PTI*

Jaiswal's ton, Kohli's 50 guide India to Series win over SA

Virat named Player of the Series, says haven't played like this

VISAKHAPATNAM, 6 DEC

Yashasvi Jaiswal reeled off an unbeaten maiden ODI hundred, carrying India to a nine-wicket victory in the third and final one-dayer and a 2-1 series win against South Africa here on Saturday.

It was always a case of the margin of victory once Jaiswal (116 not out, 121 balls) and his senior opening partner Rohit Sharma (75, 73 balls) stitched 155 runs in 25.5 overs, and it turned precisely so as India finished with 271 for one in 39.5 overs, chasing 271.

Virat Kohli contributed a classy 65 not out off 45 deliveries.Quinton de Kock made a refined 106 off 89 balls, his 23rd ton in ODIs, but it remained a shiny footnote as Indian batters dictated the course with authority.

Jaiswal was not comfortable initially in his innings, but the assured presence of Rohit at the other end was a massive blessing for him.

Rohit guided the understudy, who was playing only his fourth ODI, through some early turbulent phases, and also did the bulk of the scoring.

The 38-year-old reached his fifty in 54 balls, tranquil by his standards, but those patented, magical swivel pull shots, three of them sailed for sixes, lent the innings a touch of aggression.

Yashasvi Jaiswal and Virat Kohli *PHOTO: PTI*

Virat Kohli was named Player of the Series after India defeated South Africa in the third ODI to clinch the three-match series on Saturday. Virat Kohli named Player of the Series, says haven't played like this in 2-3 years

It enabled Jaiswal to collect runs unhurriedly, and he walked to fifty in 75 balls. But once he reached his fifty, the left-hander grew in confidence and opened a lot more, unbuckling some of those drives and cuts that he carefully avoided in the early phase of his innings.

Rohit, who became the fourth Indian batter to reach 20000 international runs during his knock after Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid and Kohli, looked set for another hundred.

But an ill-timed sweep off left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj cut short his stay. But that didn't deter Jaiswal, who, accompanied by Kohli, kept India's innings moving. —*PTI*

Kuldeep Yadav, Prasidh Krishna and Rohit Sharma *PHOTO: PTI*

ASHES 2ND TEST

Mitchell Starc torments England with bat and ball

BRISBANE, 6 DEC

> More is to come from Australia's "incredible" veteran Ashes wrecking ball, Mitchell Starc
>
> -Wasim Akram, Legendary Pakistan pacer

Australia is on the brink of grabbing a 2-0 lead in the Ashes series after dominating a feeble England on a pivotal third day of the day-night second Test in Brisbane on Saturday.

But led by unlikely batting hero Mitchell Starc, Australia made 511 and kept England out on the field during the blisteringly hot day session.

At the close, England skipper Ben Stokes and Will Jacks were holding on grimly, both unbeaten on four runs apiece.

England openers Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett had got the visitors off to a rapid start to their second innings, taking England to 45-0 at dinner off just six overs.

The hosts batted England out of the game during the day session at the Gabba, then took full advantage of the changed conditions under lights to reduce England to 134-6 at stumps, still trailing by 43 runs.

But once the lights took full effect, batting became increasingly difficult with extra movement off the pitch. Duckett was first to go, somewhat unluckily, when a ball from Scott Boland kept low and hit the bottom of his bat before smashing into the stumps, leaving England 48-1.

England 334 & 134 for 6 (Crawley 44, Neser 2-27, Boland 2-33, Starc 2-48) trail Australia 511 (Starc 77, Weatherald 72, Labuschagne 65, Carse 4-152) by 43 runs —*PTI*

Mitchell Starc *PHOTO: PTI*

1st Test WI vs NZ: WI snatches a draw after an epic Greaves 202 not out

CHRISTCHURCH, 6 DEC

Justin Greaves made an unbeaten 202 in a 230-run partnership with Kemar Roach as the West Indies won an endurance contest against a threadbare New Zealand attack Saturday to draw the first test after being set 531 to win. The West Indies' second innings of 457-6 was the highest fourth-innings score since tests have been limited to five days.

Justin Greaves *PHOTO: PTI*

At times they flirted with the highest winning run chase in history Saturday, until with six wickets down in the last session Greaves and Roach finally put up the shutters.

Greaves batted for almost 9 1-2 hours, first in a 196-run partnership with Shai, who made 140 before being only of only two West Indies batters dismissed on the final day. Roach, who finished 58 not out, faced 233 balls to add a half century to his five-wicket bag in the New Zealand second innings. "Resilient is the word we've thrown around in the dressing room a lot so for me to to there at the end of the day was really important.

Anything for the team at the end of the day," Greaves said. "It's a special, special day for me, a special day for the team. We were pretty much up against it."

At the same time, New Zealand's heavily depleted attack toiled through part of the fourth day and all of the final day with only two fit seamers, both novices, a spin bowling allrounder and a part-time spinner.

West Indies 167 (Hope 56, Chanderpaul 52, Duffy 5-34) and 457 for 6 (Greaves 202*, Hope 140, Roach 58*, Duffy 3-122) drew with New Zealand 231 (Williamson 52, Bracewell 47, Seales 2-44, Roach 2-47) and 466 for 8 dec (Ravindra 176, Latham 145, Roach 5-78). —*PTI*

SYED MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY

Saurashtra edge out K'taka by 1 run

AHMEDABAD, 6 DEC

Saurashtra registered their narrowest T20 victory in terms of runs, edging Karnataka by one run.

Batting first, Saurashtra rode on collective contributions, with Vishvaraj Jadeja (40) and Siddhant Rana (42) leading the way as they posted 178 for 8.

Their bowlers then held their nerve, with Chetan Sakariya (2 for 37), Jaydev Unadkat (2 for 29), and Prerak Mankad (2 for 37) sharing the spoils to restrict Karnataka to 177 for 9.

Devdutt Padikkal's 46-ball 66 kept Karnataka in the contest as they reached 103 for 3 in the 13th over, but back-to-back wickets of Manvanth Kumar L (9) and Shubhang Hegde (14) in successive deliveries of the 19th over dented their chase.

Karnataka eventually fell short despite No. 11 batter Vijaykumar Vyshak striking two fours at the death.

Strong fifties from Kumar Kushagra and Virat Singh were complemented by a disciplined bowling effort as Jharkhand defeated Tamil Nadu by 28 runs in their Elite Group D match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy here on Saturday.

Virat and Anukul Roy then provided the late acceleration to propel Jharkhand to a strong 207 for 3.

Kushagra struck five fours and as many sixes, while Virat's innings was laced with 10 boundaries and two sixes.

Jharkhand beat TN by 28 runs

Tamil Nadu stayed in contention in the first half of the chase, with Sai Sudharsan (64 off 42 balls) anchoring the effort as they reached 124 for 2 in the 14th over.

However, Sudharsan's run-out in the same over triggered a collapse, and Tamil Nadu failed to recover, finishing at 179 for 7.

Sushant Mishra (2 for 51) and Bal Krishna (2 for 29) picked up two wickets apiece.

Brief scores:

Saurashtra 178 for 8 in 20 overs (Vishvaraj Jadeja 40, Siddhant Rana 42; Vijaykumar Vyshak 3/28) beat Karnataka 177 for 9 in 20 overs (Devdutt Padikkal 66; Chetan Sakariya 2/37) by one run Jharkhand 207 for 3 in 20 overs (Kumar Kushagra 84, Virat Singh 72; T Natarajan 1/36) beat Tamil Nadu 179 for 7 in 20 overs (Sai Sudharsan 64; Bal Krishna 2/29) by 28 runs. —*PTI*

RUDRANKKSH, BABUTA, AND ELAVENIL DISAPPOINT IN SHOOTING WC FINAL

GENEVA, 6 DEC

India's former world champion Rudrankksh Balasaheb Patil and Paris Olympic finalist Arjun Babuta missed out on medals in men's 10m air rifle, finishing fourth and sixth, respectively, in the season-ending ISSF World Cup Final on Saturday.

Elavenil Valarivan also came up short in women's 10m air rifle, finishing ninth in the qualification round and failing to make the eight-shooter final. Rudrankksh, the 2022 world champion who has shown good form this season by clinching the World Cup gold in Buenos Aires, came into the star-studded final after finishing fourth in the qualification round with a score of 631.9. Babuta entered the eight-shooter final after finishing third with 633.3, even as double Olympic gold medallist at the Paris Olympics, China's Sheng Lihao, led the field, tallying 637.7. Former world champion Victor Lindgren of Sweden was second with a score of 633.5. —*PTI*

2026 FIFA WORLD CUP DRAW

FIFA President Gianni Infantino, U.S. President Donald Trump, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, and Canadian Prime Minister during the draw for the 2026 World Cup at the Kennedy Center in Washington *PHOTO: PTI*

Buendía nets last-gasp winner to hand Arsenal title blow

LONDON, 6 DEC

Emiliano Buendía scored a last-minute winner as Aston Villa beat Arsenal 2-1 on Saturday to blow the Premier League title race wide open.

Leandro Trossard had cancelled out Matty Cash's opener at Villa Park but Buendia, off the bench, scored in the last minute of stoppage time.

The defeat cuts Arsenal's lead at the top to three points over Villa, while Manchester City could go second later on Saturday. Martin Odegaard shot straight at Martinez when we won back possession in a dangerous area —*PTI*

WORLD CUP DEFENSE

Argentina and Messi will open against Algeria

WASHINGTON, 6 DEC

All around the globe, eyes focused on the stage where World Cup paths were sorted, nations' names chosen one by one in a draw that determined Argentina and Lionel Messi would start their title defense against Algeria.

Twenty-seven months after qualifying began, teams from five-time champion Brazil to newcomers Cape Verde, Curaçao, Jordan, and Uzbekistan learned their group-stage opponents in the expanded 48-nation, 104-game tournament that starts June 11 in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

"Exciting for the island, for the people there. They're so proud," said Dick Advocaat, the 78-year-old Dutchman leading Curaçao, a Caribbean country with a population of 150,000, into an opener against four-time champion Germany. On a day that began with snow falling on the nation's capital, the ceremony at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts included US President Donald Trump receiving a newly created peace prize awarded by FIFA, soccer's governing body. Trump, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney picked up plastic spheres containing their own nations' names from bowls Sheinbaum drew more applause from those gathered in the hall than Trump.

Tom Brady, Shaquille O'Neal, Aaron Judge, and Wayne Gretzky took part. New Zealand was the last orb picked. —*PTI*

Iran to play at least one WC game on US soil

GENEVA, 6 DEC

Iran will play at least one of its World Cup matches in the United States, though the tournament draw on Friday avoided a group-stage clash between the geopolitical rivals.

The Iranian team, representing a country targeted by U.S. airstrikes in June and whose citizens are subject to a travel ban imposed by President Donald Trump's administration, will open its World Cup campaign against New Zealand in Seattle or Inglewood, California, on 15 June.

Iran's next two games could be played across the Canadian border in Vancouver or in Inglewood and Seattle. FIFA will confirm the detailed game schedule on late Saturday.

The United States was drawn to play Australia, Paraguay, and a third team to be determined in the European playoffs in March.

Iran's participation in the tournament, co-hosted by the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, has already presented diplomatic challenges. —*PTI*